DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 517 EA 017 966

AUTHOR	Lounsbury, John H., Ed.
TITLE	Perspectives: Middle School Education, 1964-1984.
INSTITUTION	National Middle School Association, Columbus, OH.
PUB DATE	84
NOTE	194p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, National Middle School Association, P.O. Box 14822, Columbus, OH 43214 ($9.95; quantity discounts).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Design; Elementary Secondary Education; Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Design; Instructional Development; *Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; Junior High School Students; *Middle Schools; Preadolescents; School Supervision; Secondary School Curriculum; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS	National Middle School Association

ABSTRACT

This collection of essays provides extensive background information and varied views on the history, philosophy, and curriculum of the middle school as a movement or as an educational design for pre- and early adolescents. After a brief prologue by editor John H. Lounsbury, 14 essays by separate authors are presented: "The Junior High School: Successes and Failures" by George E. Melton; "The Middle School Emerges and Flourishes" by William M. Alexander; "The Nature of Transescents" by Donald H. Eichhorn; "The Functions of Middle Level Schools" by Gordon F. Vars; "Middle School Instructional Organization: An Emerging Consensus" by Paul S. George; "Balance in the Middle School Curriculum" by Mary F. Compton; "Selecting Appropriate Instructional Strategies" by Alfred A. Arth; "The Generics of Middle School Teaching" by Nancy Doda; "Administering a Middle School" by Elliot Y. Merenbloom; "Preparing Teachers for the Middle School" by C. Kenneth McEwin; "Staff Development and In-Service Education" by Conrad F. Toepfer, Jr.; "A Synthesis of Research Findings on Middle Level Education" by J. Howard Johnston; and "The Development of the National Middle School Association" by Winston Pickett. An epilogue follows, also by the editor, entitled "Unfinished Business: An Agenda for the Next Decade." Appended are a list of the presidents of the National Middle School Association (NMSA), a directory of the authors in this volume, and a list of NMSA publications.(TE)

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PERSPECTIVES

Middle School Education
1964 — 1984

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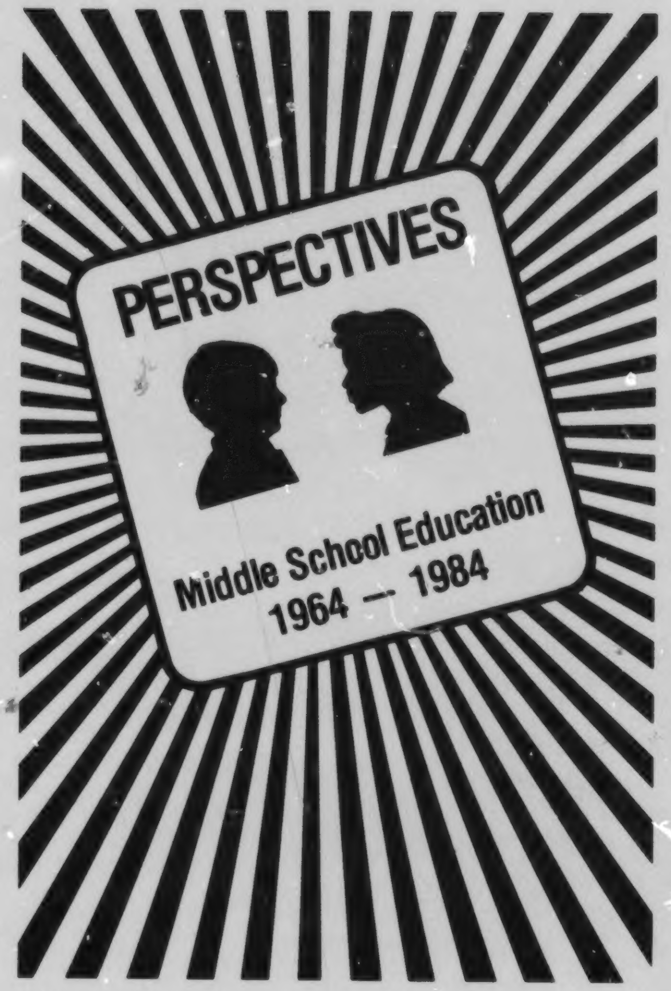
PERSPECTIVES
Middle School Education
1964 — 1984

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Printed by Omni Press of Macon, Inc., P.O. Box 6555, Macon, Georgia

Perspectives: Middle School Education, 1964 - 1984

John H. Lounsbury
Editor

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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Foreword

For more than a decade now, the National Middle School Association has sought to provide services for the professionals who work with pre- and early adolescents. An expanding array of publications has been one of the main ways the Association has rendered such service.

Contained in the pages that follow is the Association's most ambitious publication to date, a yearbook that I believe will be of historical and continuing importance. Written by nationally recognized authorities, it will be of value to the experienced practitioner, to the newcomer to this exciting field of education, and to the serious educational scholar.

This volume presents the reader with extensive background information and varied views of the middle school. The contents touch on the history, philosophy, and curriculum of the middle school. Related aspects such as research findings and pre- and in-service education are discussed.

Each of the authors has addressed a segment of the middle school as a movement or as an educational design for pre- and early adolescents. The contents afford each reader the knowledge and views necessary to understand the middle school concept. Administrators, teachers, and students of the middle school will be pleased with the thoroughness of this volume.

The yearbook documents the efforts of editor John H. Lounsbury, who nurtured this work from conception to a definitive work of enduring value. The National Middle School Association has added another fine publication to the middle school library and is grateful to the authors for their willingness to share their experience, expertise, and scholarship.

Ron Johnson
President, National Middle
School Association, 1983-84

Editor's Introduction

The middle school movement has been, and is, characterized by a high degree of professional commitment. There exists among middle level educators a certain spirit, a sense of camaraderie, that seems to inject a bit of adrenalin into their professional activities.

The creation of this special anniversary volume is a case in point. The invited authors all readily agreed to prepare chapters with no recompense, and followed through without need for constant reminders about due dates, despite their heavy loads of professional responsibilities. The Directory of Authors, located on page 180, provides some limited information on the educational careers of the authors, a group varied in ages and areas of expertise, but all with a genuine commitment to middle school education.

The Association and the education profession owe them a debt of gratitude. As editor, I am grateful for their cooperation, their evident competence, and their professional stature. I am, indeed, proud to call them colleagues and friends.

The authors wrote independently. Although they were aware of the projected table of contents and the identity of fellow authors, no collaboration occured. Collaboration was not appropriate because the goal of this volume was to compile the individual views of a range of established authorities in middle level education. Although several authors may make the same point, such repetition is itself a necessary element in achieving the overview sought. The varied styles and viewpoints ultimately blend well to produce a volume that will, I believe, give readers a much needed and better perspective on this important educational movement.

October, 1983 John H. Lounsbury

I

John H. Lounsbury

Prologue

Age enhances perspective. The longer an individual or an institution exists, the greater is the accumulation of experience and thus the more certain is the separation from the possibly excessive influence of the immediate. The long view is almost always a more valid view.

At this time in the history of American education it is particularly important that events be viewed in perspective. Contemporary assessments of American education typically lack adequate perspective and are excessively negative. Education was once called "the American religion" for our people were so captured by it, so committed to it as a means of achieving a better life. Today, however, the mood of the public toward education is one of disenchantment and education is viewed as somewhat of a failure. A fair assessment of education is somewhere between these two perceptions.

The renewed interest in public education which was brought to a head by several major reports in 1983 has generated extensive responses by boards of education at the state and local levels. Education Secretary Terrel Bell in May of 1984 characterized the actions taken in the past year as a "tidal wave of reform." A great many of these reforms, however well-intentioned, are misguided and simplistic. Particularly unfortunate is the misapplication of high school oriented recommendations to the middle school. The middle level itself received almost no direct attention in these reports. Never has the need for perspective been more urgent.

The twenty years just passed have been years of excitement and expansion, of debate and discovery. For the middle school, numerical success is a matter of clear record. The label, *middle school,* has also gained widespread acceptance. But a realization of how limited is the implementation of the educational concepts of the middle school gnaws at educators. So too does the continuing tendency to the view the middle level as only a downward extension of secondary education.

As we move past that once apprehensively awaited year of 1984, the question, "Will the middle school fade into the background as have so many other educational movements, or will it continue to alter the character of American education?" confronts us.

This yearbook has been developed as a means of providing some perspective on the field of intermediate or middle level education. It should help us look back, look around, and look ahead. It may not provide desired answers, but it will certainly aid any reader interested in considering the pertinent questions in the field of middle level education.

Education in the United States has always presented many patterns of school organization, both between states and within states. Even as the 8-4 plan seemed to have gained full acceptance in the late 1800s as the right way to organize public education, a few areas of the young nation followed an 8-5 plan while others went with a 7-4 arrangement. Then the dominant 8-4 plan itself received a challenge from developments that followed Harvard President Charles W. Eliot's landmark address to the superintendents' association in 1888. That talk, which raised the question, "can school programs be shortened and enriched?," and the several major committees which followed it, launched what became known as the reorganization movement. Out of it emerged the junior high school in the 1910s and, half a century later, the middle school.

Junior high schools, then, have existed for three-quarters of a century, middle schools for one-quarter of a century. Neither can be classified as an experiment; both are very firmly established.

Although some people have viewed the middle school as a new and independent idea; it is really a part of the on-going reorganization effort, the latest point of emphasis in the continuing effort to mesh human development and educational ideals with financial realities, administrative necessities, and tradition. And even as the term *middle school* was being introduced, the junior high school was evidencing clear signs of both a renaissance and a reformation.

As far back as the 1940s, the junior high school had grown to such an extent that the 6-3-3 pattern of school organization was the typical or median plan in America. Yet, even though the junior high school existed as an educational institution so extensively, so early, it definitely lacked an adequate identity.

Now, in 1984, the middle school, which appeared circa 1960, has grown to the point that the 5-3-4 plan has become even more common than the 6-3-3. Yet intermediate education, currently carrying the much improved banner of "middle school," still lacks the identity and common understanding that its extent warrants. Although there are now some 12,000 separate middle level institutions in the United States, they are grossly underrepresented in state certification, college teacher education programs, and in professional recognition and leadership. At the same time, public awareness and understanding of middle level education is drastically lacking.

Yet the overall success of the reorganization movement cannot be denied. Despite the obvious, admitted, and serious failings of both the junior high school and the middle school, the record, in toto, is a remarkable one. Some of the chapters in this volume attest to this reality. Limited support and recognition notwithstanding, intermediate level education institutions have become standard, widely accepted, and dominant. And though progress is painfully slow and a great deal remains to be done programmatically, there is a considerable consensus on the educational practices and approaches that constitute what has come to be called "the middle school concept," and implementation of these approaches is occuring gradually across the country.

This special yearbook presents the views and perceptions of a group of well established, nationally recognized middle school leaders. Each author has a special justification for inclusion, a special contribution to make in gaining a perspective on middle level education.

George Melton, veteran junior high school principal and now a major NASSP staff member, opens with some historical perspectives on the origins of the junior high school and identifies the problems it faced as well as its successes. Next William Alexander, often and appropriately called the father of the middle school, reviews the circumstances that led to the emergence of the middle school, presents evidences of its growth, and describes important aspects of the proposed institution.

Since the middle school is based in human growth and development, a chapter on the nature of this age group is essential and it is appropriate that Donald Eichhorn, perhaps the first major implementor of the middle school concept, provide it. Gordon Vars then applies his considerable scholarship and long experience to a review of the functions of the two institutions, tying the past with the present.

The next five chapters are essentially contemporary and school-based. Paul George, one of the strongest advocates of team planning, deals comprehensively with the way middle schools should organize for instruction and for guidance. Mary Compton, recognized teacher educator and curriculum leader, considers the factors in a balanced program and offers a fresh approach to selecting and organizing content. Creative and dynamic Alfred Arth sets forth some special instructional strategies that are appropriate for this age level. Nancy Doda then shares some of the mystique of middle school teaching as only this humane teacher can.

A discussion of the special responsibilities of the middle level principal are presented by Elliot Merenbloom, a successful middle school administrator himself. Ken McEwin, based on his extensive experience and his recent research, considers the problem of pre-service education. Conrad Toepfer, a true missionary for the movement and perhaps more involved in middle level in-service education than anyone in the country, discusses the important issue of staff development.

The particularly pertinent matter of what research has had to say about middle level education is then presented in some detail by the especially well qualified researcher Howard Johnston.

The development of the National Middle School Association, itself a significant aspect of the movement, is the basis of a chapter prepared by Winston Pickett, a middle school principal who did his doctoral study on this topic.

Your editor then closes out the yearbook with a chapter that is partially a synthesis and partially a projection of numerous tasks that should be on the agenda for action by middle level educators in the decade ahead.

You are urged to read the following chapters that you may gain satisfaction from what has been accomplished in establishing a middle level of education, be made sensitive to the many problems that exist, be further enlightened concerning the middle school concept, and, finally, be challenged to take up the cause of improving middle school education — with a new perspective.

II

George E. Melton

The Junior High School: Successes and Failures

The times were not unlike our own. Spurred by a growing dissatisfaction with the state of education, a flow of reports began during the closing decade of the 19th century, recommending the reorganization of the 8-4 plan of organization and improvement of America's public schools. That flow would become a torrent in the two decades to follow.

A basic recommendation of the majority of these reports was the establishment of a six-year high school in a 6-6 plan of organization. Rather than recommend a longer school day and a longer school year as has recently been done, the Committee on Economy of Time in Education based its 1909 recommendation on the thesis that two years could be saved "in the entire period of general education without loss of anything essential in culture, efficiency, or character-thinking." In a final 1913 report, the Committee stated that its original thesis had been proved: namely, that the period of elementary and secondary education could be shortened by two years without necessarily reducing its value.

Although the 1918 report of the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education did suggest that the six proposed years of secondary education might be divided into two periods that could be designated as the junior and senior periods, it is a fact that none of these major committees on educational reform advanced a precise plan of grade organization which provided for the junior high school. This does not, however, mean that these committees had little or no influence on the development of the junior high school. As Gruhn and Douglass (1947) wrote, "The basic philosophy and practically all of the important administrative and instructional features of the early junior high schools were largely the outgrowth of the recommendations of the various deliberative committees that served for two decades beginning with the Committee of Ten in 1892" (p.34).

The basic concepts underlying the junior high school idea stressed by these various committees included:

1. better provision in the school program for the needs of adolescents
2. provision for the exploration of pupil-interest and ability
3. individualization of the instructional program
4. better articulation between elementary and secondary education.

Flexibility and promotions, departmentalized teaching and earlier introduction of secondary studies were among the administrative and instructional practices that were also proposed by some of the committees and which were introduced into the early junior high schools. Amidst these stirrings, and, as a result of the work of countless pioneers, a new movement in education, the junior high school, was born. Exactly when and where this birth occurred is subject to, but unworthy of, debate. Some early instances were:

- In 1896, the public schools of Richmond, Indiana, introduced a two-year intermediate school for grades 7 and 8.
- In 1909, a three-year intermediate school was established in Columbus, Ohio.
- In 1910, two "introductory high schools" were opened in Berkeley, California.

Frank F. Butler, Berkeley superintendent at that time, called these the first three-year intermediate schools to introduce a modified program especially designed to meet the needs of early adolescents. This modification, he explained was accomplished by such things as the offering of elective courses, the introduction of foreign languages, enrichment in the content and methods of instruction, and departmentalized teaching at the intermediate level. (Gruhn and Douglass, p. 38)

Which of these was, in reality, the first junior high school is of little consequence. Of importance, is the fact that a new movement in education had been launched and that for the first time in the history of America's public schools, concentrated efforts were being made to provide appropriate educational programming for early adolescents.

"Every new movement in education, if it is to succeed at all, must pass through two critical stages of development before it can find its proper place," wrote Alexander Inglis in the introduction to *The Junior High School* by Thomas H. Briggs in 1920 (p.v.). Inglis went on to say that the first stage was the struggle for recognition by educators and the public, and the second stage was winning approval although in actual practice, the character or status of the new movement is still to be established. According to Inglis, the success or failure of the movement may be determined at either of these two stages. He believed evidence in 1920 proved that the junior high school movement had passed successfully through the first stage of its development, even though little more than a decade had passed since its real beginning.

That general approval had resulted in phenomenal growth. By 1918, the number of junior high schools had grown to 557 and two years later to 883. That growth pattern continued until there were more than 7,000 junior high schools in the United States, including both 7-9 and 7-8 schools.

Inglis also wrote an observation that might well have been taken as a warning, or at least, as a word of caution. He said that although hundreds of junior high schools had been established in all parts of the country, obviously meeting with general approval, they testified that those responsible for their organization differed widely about what such schools should be. He further observed that the junior high school movement in 1920 was in a very critical stage of development. "It is a time when the form of reorganization is found in hundreds of school systems, but the real reorganization attempted in but few. It is a time when there is danger of numerous junior high schools in name, but few in fact"(p.vi).

The widely differing ideas about the junior high school ranged from a simple and straightforward belief in the downward extension of the senior high school programs and activities into the 7th and 8th grades, to the call for an entirely new program addressing the uniqueness of early adolescence. Although there are limited substantiating records, it appears that the advocates of the latter position lost the opening round. In respect to fostering appropriate educational opportunities for early adolescents, the choice of the name "junior high school" for the new institution was at best unfortunate, and at worst destructive. It placed "junior" as an adjective and almost insured that the school would become a smaller version of the real thing.

Where that became the purpose, the failures are easy to trace: full departmentalization, interscholastic athletics at the expense of intramurals, inappropriate social activities, premature emphasis on academic requirements at the expense of discovery and exploration, the confusion of sophistication for maturity. These, however, were not really the fault of the name but of the interpreters of the name.

Fortunately for the institution and for the young people it was destined to serve, many called for the kind of programming that was really needed. As early as 1920, Briggs suggested the intermediate school should attempt at least five things:

- to continue insofar as it may seem wise and possible and in a gradually diminishing degree, common, integrating education;

- to ascertain and reasonably to satisfy pupils' important, immediate, and assured future needs;
- to explore by means of material, in itself worthwhile, the interests, aptitudes and capacities of pupils;
- to reveal to them by materials otherwise justifiable, the possibilities in the major fields of learning;
- to start each pupil on the career, which as a result of the exploratory courses, he and his parents and the school are convinced is most likely to be of profit to him and to the state. (pp.162-175)

Contemporary writers might state those points differently, but no one can dispute that they call for something other than the downward extension of the high school program. Key words such as *integrating, explore, interest, aptitudes* and *capacities,* and *needs* are not unlike those found throughout the history of middle level literature, to and including the present time. This statement and others like it were there to guide early junior high school development.

Why then was the road to the fullest potential of the junior high school so difficult to traverse, and why was the journey so seldom completed?

Failure to Achieve a Needed Recognition

In addition to the name "junior high school," another major problem was the inability of the movement to gain state department recognition that would lead to the preparation of teachers and administrators specifically for the junior high school. Without this recognition, and in many cases, without any encouragement that such recognition might be forthcoming, those responsible for the creation of teacher and administrator preparation programs had little incentive to offer coursework or to provide experiences designed to prepare persons for work at the middle level.

This is not to say that the proponents of appropriate junior high schools were ineffective. It is important to remember that the many significant successes the junior high school achieved were the direct results of thousands of administrators and teachers in the field, encouraged and supported by the efforts of persons like Thomas H. Briggs, William T. Gruhn, Forrest E. Long, Gertrude Noar, Elsworth Tompkins, J. Lloyd Trump, Erin Lauchner, Harl Douglass, M. Dale Baughman, and scores of others.

The Realities of Reorganization

Although some junior high schools were created to introduce a program specifically designed to meet the needs of early adolescents, a major problem was that much if not most of the reorganization was done for administrative and not educational purposes. Fluctuating enrollment figures, building utilization, staffing and budgetary problems, and other like factors, usually took precedence over the need for a unique intermediate program. In some of these cases, however, the reorganization was followed by the adoption of an appropriate philosophy and program. In others, it quite simply was not.

Lack Of Public Understanding Of Early Adolescents and Their Needs

A problem that still faces middle level schools is that much of the general public does not understand and often seems not to like early adolescents. This problems persists after nearly 75 years of junior high and middle school experience in this country. There are those who continue to advocate the K-8/9-12 system, and a scattering of districts have actually returned to it. Much of this kind of reorganization or retrenchment is proposed for the same kind of administrative reasons that marked the development of many middle level schools. One also suspects that some are because of an unexpressed, and perhaps unconscious hope, that if there were no intermediate school, early adolescents and their problems would simply disappear into the other two institutions.

BUT WERE THEY FAILURES?

In a 1983 interview, William T. Gruhn responded to "What school practices illustrate the failures of the movement?" by saying he was reluctant to refer to the shortcomings of the junior high school as "failures." "Rather, I think, we have problems, some of which have been with us since the beginning of...the movement" (Melton, p.2).

Problems. Failures. Whatever one chooses to call them, they existed and in abundance. Could any institution achieve its original purpose and establish a record, not only of success in fulfilling those purposes, but one that would make substantial contributions to the entire field of public education? The answer is a resounding "yes." The junior high school, in spite of its problems, or failures, or both, did achieve a number of major successes that have provided a foundation for the further improvement of education at the middle level.

Reduction of Dropouts

In the early years of this century, before the introduction of the junior high school, educators and the general public were alarmed by the number of dropouts at the 7th and 8th grade level. This was particularly true of boys. The 7th and 8th grades were said to be repetitious of the years that had preceded them. Because of this, they were lacking in interest and had minimum holding power. The junior high school introduced experiences in home economics, industrial arts, laboratory science, and other specialized activities that provided a level of interest that resulted in a markedly increased holding power at these grade levels. The dropout rate was significantly reduced. As the achievement of this reduction had been a goal of the new institution, the fact that it occurred must be labelled one of its earliest successes although some credit must also be given to the compulsory attendance laws that were beginning to appear.

The Concept of Exploration

The advancement of the concept of exploration is one of the major keystones of junior high school successes. It has been treated in almost all of the major middle level writings from the very beginning of the movement down to and including the present time. Exploration is clearly a function of the junior high school, of middle level education.

Although the introduction of the concept of exploration is one of the major contributions of the junior high school, and as such, is one of its successes, there is within that success a hint of failure. When asked if there were exploratory experiences in the curriculum, junior high school educators 20 and 30 years ago generally responded positively, adding that there was within their schedule, home economics, industrial arts, and the like.

But there was also English, math, science, social studies, physical education, and a number of other things. The purpose of a good middle level school is not just to provide some subjects that might be labelled "exploratory," but to provide experiences within every subject that are exploratory in nature. By so doing, early adolescents will be provided with an opportunity to explore, not just a subject, but many approaches to that subject, and thus, to discover a basis for making future elective choices and for making pre-vocational and pre-collegiate decisions.

A major factor contributing to the efficacy of the concept of exploration is the fact that the junior high school provided students with their first opportunity to work with teachers having specialized training and skills in the specific disciplines and offered them that opportunity at a time which was the last in their public school experience when they could take advantage of it without a concern for the accumulation of a satisfactory grade point average, or for the earning of a credit toward high school graduation. These opportunities greatly enhanced the exploratory function and provided many students the opportunity to try something they might not otherwise have tried. Through these experiences, some students found life-long avocational interests and others even vocational interests.

The Provision of Guidance Services

No sub-group in the K-12 spectrum is more in need of guidance services than is early adolescence. Before the advent of the junior high school, such services were available to them only rarely, if at all.

The junior high school introduced the role of the counselor to the pre-high school years and made guidance services an integral part of the total school program. The homeroom became the foundation for a school-wide guidance program, and teachers, assisted by the counselors, provided badly needed direction for early adolescents. The active involvement of the teachers in the guidance program provided them with a depth of understanding of the needs of early adolescents that had not been provided in their pre-service training.

Co-Curricular Activities

The junior high school may not have invented the term "co-curricular," but it certainly gave the term emphasis. Athletics, clubs, and other school-sponsored activities were not unknown in the senior high school, but they were primarily extracurricular in nature and were, therefore, scheduled outside the regular school program.

Through the provision of in-school time for a wide variety of clubs and activities, junior high school students were given an opportunity not only to explore a wide range of interests, but also to develop social and leadership skills.

A common feature of many early junior high schools was a daily activity period within the regular schedule. This period was used for interest clubs in the areas of math/science, foreign languages, writing, drama, industrial arts, homemaking, and almost every other curricular area. Lapidary, photography, physical fitness, laboratory assistance, oral history, and similar activities joined band, orchestra, chorus, and student council during this time.

As the academic crunch began to be felt, such periods within the daily schedule became less frequent and in many cases disappeared. Credit needs to be given to those creative administrators and teachers who found ways to break the traditional schedule and found time throughout the school for this vital function in the overall schedule.

Experimentation and Innovation

Many worthwhile educational experiments and innovations found fertile ground in the junior high school. Free from the kinds of restrictions imposed on the senior high school, such as the Carnegie Unit, the junior high school served a central role in the development of a number of educational advances, including team planning and teaching, interdisciplinary planning and teaching, core curriculum, blocks of time and block-scheduling, flexible and modular scheduling, unified arts, cycles of exploratory activities, and a concern for affective education.

That this was possible was the result of the flexibility permitted in those junior high schools organized specifically as schools for early adolescents. This was true for the 7th and 8th graders, and also for 9th graders in those enlightened states and districts where credit towards high school graduation and the accumulation of grade point averages were begun at the 10th, rather that the 9th grade level.

Provision for Individual Differences

Much of the early initiative for the provision for individual differences was to be found in the junior high school movement. Briggs noted in 1920 that it was possible to find 13-year-old children in every grade, from kindergarten to the high school. Because of this, he proposed that the school should systematically seek to ascertain the nature and extent of the individual differences of its pupils, that it should decide which of them it is reasonable to seek to reduce or eliminate, that it should adopt a definite policy for the provision of an education suitable to those differences which it cannot reasonably eliminate, and finally, that it should recognize that, as a public school, it owes to each pupil a similar amount of attention, regardless of the various kinds of differences.

From this and successive discussions came a differentiated curriculum, promotion by subject rather than by grade, and ungraded rooms, sometimes called "opportunity rooms," the forerunners of our efforts at special education.

CONCLUSION

Successes and failures are the elements of biography, and of history. When that history is of an institution, such as the junior high school, a review of the successes should provide a foundation for future growth of that institution and of its successors. The failures should provide caution for that institution and its successors.

There is this kind of warning in the final paragraph of Briggs' *The Junior High School.*

> "The junior high school is accepted in theory, and its possibilities have proved so alluring that the movement for reorganization is well underway in both urban and rural districts. The physical redistribution of the grades seems assured, but if having accomplished that, schoolmen rest content, they will have missed the one, great educa-

> tional opportunity of their generation for real educational reform. There is a demand for purposes so clear and so cogent that they will result in new curriculum, new courses of study, new methods of teaching, and new social relationships. In short, in a new spirit which will make the intermediate years not only worthwhile in themself, but also an intelligent inspiration for every child to continue as long as profitable, the education for which he is, by inheritance, best fitted. In its essence, the junior high school is a device of democracy whereby nurture may cooperate with nature to secure the best possible results for each individual adolescent, as well as for society at large. (p. 327)

Where junior high school educators succumbed to the allure of the new movement and placed too high a value on its rapid growth and the physical redistribution of the grades, the institution failed.

On the other hand, where junior high school educators created a new curriculum, new courses of study, new methods of teaching, and new social relationships to meet needs, interests, and abilities of early adolescents, the junior high school succeeded.

Our times are not unlike those times.

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III

William M. Alexander

The Middle School Emerges and Flourishes

In October, 1965, Education Editor Paul Woodring predicted in a *Saturday Review* editorial a development that then seemed far off: "it now appears that the 6-3-3 plan, with its junior high school, is on the way out" (p. 77). Twenty years later the "new school in the middle," is definitely "in." Data to be cited in this chapter show that the new organizations (generally, schools having three to five grades, including grades 6 and 7 but not 9) are more numerous that the now traditional grade 7-9 junior high school, but the latter are not yet "out." In fact, the movement seems to have established a middle level between the elementary and secondary ones, with more than one combination of grades possible at each of the three levels.

WHY A NEW SCHOOL IN THE MIDDLE?

Many reasons, in various manifestations and combinations locally, contributed to the widespread reorganization after 1960 of the middle years of schooling. Certainly the gap between hopes for and achievements of the junior high school, has been a significant overriding reason, but other developments have also been very relevant, especially these two: (1) the earlier maturation of girls and boys during the middle school years, with related, increasing concern about the traditional program's match with the needs of that age group, and (2) local problems of buildings, enrollments, desegregation, and other such matters. The present author's survey (Alexander, 1968) in 1967-68 of a stratified random sample of 110 reorganized middle schools asked each respondent to check a list of possible reasons to indicate why the school concerned had been established. The results are shown (as 1967) in the accompanying table, along with those Brooks secured (1977) using the same checklist a decade later (Brooks and Edwards, 1978). These and other data are discussed in the following account of the middle school movement, organized so as to focus on its rationale.

Reasons For Establishing Middle Schools*

Reason	Percent 1967	Percent 1977
To move grade 9 into the high school	24.5	29.2
To provide more specialization in grades 5 and/or 6	30.0	20.1
To bridge the elementary and high school better	40.0	62.7
To remedy the weakness of the junior high school	24.5	36.0
To aid desegregation	6.5	14.2
To eliminate crowded conditions in other schools	58.2	47.7
To provide a program specifically designed for children in this age group	44.6	68.3
To utilize a new school building	20.9	18.7
To try out various innovations	23.6	22.9
To use plans which have been successfully implemented in other school systems	12.7	13.4

*Adapted from Brooks and Edwards, 1978, p. 5. The 1967 data are from the Alexander survey, 1967-68, and the 1977 data from the Brooks survey, 1977.

For An Effective Transitional Program

Statements of rationale for the new school in the middle included much reference to the same need for "articulation," "transition," and/or "continuity" as had been cited for the predecessor junior high. The concept of the junior high school as a "bridging" institution had been prominent in much of the literature of the junior high school movement (see Chapters 2 and 5).

James B. Conant's influential report (1960) on junior high school education confirmed the importance of this transitional function, but indicated a lack of conviction as to what grade organization would best achieve it. A 1961 ASCD report, *The Junior High School We Need,* recommended many changes in the junior high school, and in connection with a proposal that "the junior high school of the future be an ungraded institution," stated:

> There may be serious questions as to whether or not the junior high school of the future should include the traditional ninth grade. It may be more reasonable to start junior high school with what is now considered the sixth grade, and return the ninth grade to the senior high program. (pp. 22-23.)

Proponents of reorganization found the junior high school lacking in providing a transitional program. In writing about the junior high as "Education's Problem Child," Mauritz Johnson (1962) noted that "the junior high school is supposed to be a bridge between the elementary school and the upper secondary level and, indeed, a bridge between childhood and that attenuated near-adult stage we call adolescence" but that "many schools, it must be conceded, have been less than successful in this regard" (pp. 40-41). He added:

> And, as with the girl with the curl, a good junior high school can be very, very good, but a poor one can be horrid.

Speaking at a Junior High School Conference Johnson directed at Cornell University the following summer, the present writer (1964) summarized as follows the views many educators held:

> However needed a transition between the elementary and the high school, there are grave doubts as to the functioning of the junior high school in this regard...the usually departmentalized program and organization of the junior high school tends to defeat the transitional function...The general adoption by junior high schools of the activity program and the organization of the high school attests to the dominance of the idea that the bridge was fundamentally a vestibule added at the front door of the high school. (p. 16)

Our table shows that many of the junior high and middle school principals responding to both the 1967 and 1977 surveys (almost two-thirds in 1977) regarded the bridging function as a reason for establishing their own schools, and that substantial numbers—about one fourth in 1967 and over one-third in 1977—checked the reason "to remedy the weaknesses of the junior high school." Specific weaknesses mentioned by its critics and even by some of its supporters include:

adoption of the high school program of studies and grading system,

size, regimentation, and impersonal climate as compared with the feeder elementary schools

lack of personnel trained for work with the age group
the name, "*junior* high school"
lack of continuing instruction in basic skills
lack of extended relationship of each student with one teacher or counselor.

The conclusion is inescapable that by the 1960's many hopes for the junior high school were regarded as partially unfulfilled and perhaps unattainable in its usual organization. There had long been somewhat different programs for grades 6-8 in elementary schools and even in "upper elementary" schools and so-called "junior highs" in elementary school districts. For example, the Skokie Junior High School in the Winnetka, Illinois, elementary school district even in the 1940's had many program features which this writer and others later held to be desirable models for the new middle schools: "Survey" (short-term) courses for truly exploratory purposes; "unified studies" as a type of interdisciplinary team teaching; "enterprises" and "institutions" (Alexander and Patterson, 1951, pp. 132-36) as special interest activities for many types of school and community interests; modular scheduling (short periods, with individual students spending varying numbers of periods in unified studies); and extensive use of individualized instruction materials and techniques.

A Program for the Transescent Age Group

The early literature of the new middle school gave greater emphasis to the age group function than had been true of early junior high proposals and reports. Although one of the arguments for the junior high school had been to serve better early adolescence, a dominant notion had been to move secondary education down, whereas the middle school was proposed in part to make a longer, smoother transition to the secondary school. The early and the continuing publications on the middle school have given great emphasis to the need for a program devoted to the in-between (childhood and adolescence) years, the period Eichhorn (1966) named "transescence" and which he fully describes in the following chapter. Earlier (1959) in Eichhorn's school district, at that time Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania, the supervising principal had proposed to the Pennsylvania Department of Instruction a grade 6-8 middle school as "desirable and educationally sound" because it provided "a more natural grouping" and would permit "a better social program," and make the transition from "the self-contained classroom to a departmentalized program more gradual" (Eichhorn, 1966, pp. 2-3). The Fort Couch Middle School went into operation in Upper St. Clair in 1962-63.

A review of systems using "4-4-4" and "5-3-4" school organizations published by the New York *Herald Tribune*, May 24, 1964, reported that

Scarsdale in Westchester County, had for seven years had a 5-3-4 organization. Harold Howe, then Scarsdale superintendent and later to become a United States Commissioner of Education, was quoted as saying the "sixth-graders' are really ready for more sophisticated facilities' (laboratories, specialized art and music classes, library work) than are children up through the fifth grade and 'fit' better with seventh and eighth graders." Howe was also quoted as saying "ninth graders are more ready for high school experience and putting them with the senior-high classes provides 'greater continuity' " (Michalak, 1964).

Data regarding earlier maturation have been widely cited to support the arguments for including grade 6 and even grade 5 and for excluding grade 9 students in the middle school. An early article by Mills (1961) describing the primary-middle-high school organization (K-4-4-4) followed in Saginaw, Michigan, reported the studies there made of growth characteristics for the three levels, noting the growth similarities at the age levels represented in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. The grades 5-8 school had been named "middle school." Although middle school planners have had difficulties in implementing a program uniquely matching the developmental needs of transescents, the aim of doing so has been dominant in the statements of middle school groups and leaders. The Committee on Future Goals and Directions of the National Middle School Association recommended in 1977 that "the central goals of the NMSA shall be to improve the educational experiences of transescents by helping schools, homes, or other community institutions in their efforts to identify and meet the intellectual and personal-social needs of the age group" (Alexander, 1977), thus opting for meeting the needs of middle school age children wherever found, not just in a particular grade organization.

The significant need recognized by many middle school programs is that of the diversity of individual characteristics during the middle school years. Anthropologist Margaret Mead (1965) had complained that "we have imprisoned our early adolescents within a category, *teenager,* and our early adolescents with all the striking differences and discrepancies within a category—*junior high school student,*" pointing out that "junior high school students are more unlike each other than they have ever been before or ever will be again in the course of their lives" (p. 10). She argued for maintaining and strengthening the differences, of course, rather than reducing them to a dead level, and this focus has been attempted in the flexible grade classifications of many middle level programs. Lounsbury (1977) stated the point quite succintly: "The inherent diversity of transescents makes the implementation of the graded school concept literally impossible" (p. 2).

The goal of serving the needs of the age group was certainly reflected in the surveys reported earlier. This reason for establishing their schools was checked by nearly half of the respondents in 1967, and over two-thirds in 1977 (in this year, the most frequently checked reason). However, comparable data collected in 1980 by the NASSP's National Study of Schools in the Middle indicated a slight drop (7%) from Brooks' 1977 findings as to the number of principals checking this reason (Valentine *et al.*, 1981). The administrative/fiscal reasons for establishing their schools apparently became less significant in the decade preceding 1977, although still nearly one-half of the respondents checked the reason "to eliminate crowded conditions in other schools" in that year.

Before turning to further discussion of these administrative factors, we should note the frequency of another program-related reason: "To provide more specialization in grades 5 and/or 6." Three of every ten respondents checked this in 1967 and two of every ten in 1977 when more elementary schools had introduced team teaching or other provisions for specialization. In both years, however, there were numerous middle schools established in part because of interest in a different instructional program than the usual one of grades 5 and 6.

Administrative Problems and Policies

The 1967 and 1977 surveys confirm the significant influence of administrative problems and policies on the middle school movement. The surveys showed that the percent of schools said to have been established to eliminate overcrowding declined between 1967 and 1977 while that to aid desegregation increased. The similar returns for "to utilize a new school building" may simply indicate the ambiguity of this item, although the checks here and also on the following item ("To use plans which have been successfully implemented in other school systems") might also be interpreted as indicating the influence of reasons somewhat unrelated to the basic purposes and programs of the middle school. The NASSP survey (Valentine *et al.*, 1981) showed some increases (10% and 4%, respectively, over Brooks) in the perception of these two reasons by its respondents in 1980; the 1980 survey also yielded decreases (7% and 6%, respectively) over Brooks' 1977 data as to the perception of the program-related reasons. Certainly, there have been many middle schools established in part to reduce overcrowding of elementary and/or junior high schools in districts having space available in senior highs, and to move racially mixed populations into higher grades earlier.

The need for more space in elementary schools has also been created during the past 20 years by the increased provision of kindergartens and other early childhood programs. Their growth, stimulated by federal social and educational legislation and grants to aid them, made popular in many districts the notion to "move the kindergarten in, and the sixth grade out."

The influence of crowding and other administrative problems is reminiscent, of course, of the major push toward the junior high organization given by the bulging enrollments of eight-grade elementary schools in the 1920's and again in the 1950's, each decade following a World War and a postwar population and enrollment increase. In Lounsbury's 1954 study of junior high schools, 59% of his random sample of 158 junior high principals stressed the influence of administrative factors in the establishment of their junior highs, especially overcrowded conditions, building utilization, and growth in population and enrollment; only 30% stressed such theoretical factors as having a transitional program and providing for the needs of the age group (Lounsbury, 1954). Clearly, such administrative reasons have significantly influenced the establishment of both the junior high and the middle school. It must be pointed out, however, that such a rationale may delay or interfere with but certainly does not prohibit the development of a program serving the age group better than the prior organization; in fact the usual change of age groups may well precipitate program change. Indeed many middle schools established primarily for such administrative reasons have developed exemplary programs. The probability indicated by the multiple reasons for establishing middle schools checked by the individual respondents in the surveys cited, is that most middle schools have been established for more than one of the reasons we have discussed and others to which we now turn briefly.

Other Reasons for the New School

Another reason checked by significant numbers of survey respondents, "to move grade 9 in to the high school," undoubtedly influenced the move from a grade 7-9 to a grade 5-, 6-, or 7-8 organization. Interests in this move included such diverse but related ones as the aim of providing programs of higher quality, academically, for grade 9 and as that of reducing the pressure on grades 7 and 8 of high school academic requirements; of getting 9th graders into high school interscholastic athletics and eliminating these for grades 7 and 8; of providing a more sophisticated social and activity program for grade 9; and one less so for the younger students. Of particular significance in the early 1960's was the post-Sputnik clamor for greater emphasis on science and mathematics and the subject curriculum in general, a clamor being heard again in the 1980's. This emphasis in the 1960's tended to restrict exploratory offerings in junior high school, and middle school proponents argued that moving grade 9 to high school would help grades 7, 8, and 9; further, as we have already noted, they argued that bringing grade 6 and even 5 into the middle school would allow more academic emphasis as appropriate for these levels.

Many educators in the late 1950's and early 1960's had become convinced that various innovative practices were essential to the maintenance of good education. Almost one out of every four respondents in both the 1967 and 1977 surveys (and almost one out of three in the 1980 one) checked as a reason for establishing their middle schools, "to try out various innovations." The 1968 text on *The Emergent Middle School* (Alexander *et al.)* cited as a factor in middle school organization its use in "accelerating the change process in education," noting that "the belief that it is easier to innovate in a new than in an old organization is widespread" (p. 17). Although the innovations usually recommended have not been utilized as fully as many advocates desired, many middle schools have used such innovative practices as interdisciplinary organization for instruction, nongraded organization, block scheduling, individualized instruction, and teacher guidance plans. Comparison of their samples of junior high and middle schools resulted in conclusions by McEwin and Clay (1983) that differences were relatively small between the two types of schools as to their practices and programs but that "some gains have been made toward providing educational institutions and programs based more on the unique needs and interests of early adolescents;" the gains cited included these more innovative practices: "a small increase in the use of teaming and flexible scheduling;" "inclusion of exploratory program components;" and "the existence of teacher advisory and special interest programs" (p. 22).

A reason for middle school development held by some educators that has yet to be fulfilled is that of the improvement of teacher education through a new program. Woodring's *Saturday Review* 1965 editorial, cited earlier in this chapter, concluded as follows:

> The emerging intermediate school creates a demand for a new kind of teacher education that will differ substantially from the preparation of either primary or high school teachers. If this challenge is met in time, and if those who plan the schools show imagination and courage, the new school organization can contribute greatly to the improvement of educational quality. (p. 78)

The present writer's rationale for the middle school as presented at the Cornell Conference in 1963 had suggested this as one of four major purposes of "experimentation with a new middle school:"

> It would also facilitate the reorganization of teacher education sorely needed to provide teachers competent for the middle school; since existing patterns of neither elementary nor secondary teacher training would suffice, a new pattern would have to be developed. (Alexander, 1964, p. 22)

Some middle school teacher education programs are available 20 years later, but recent data (Alexander and McEwin, 1982) document the continuing need for a much more widespread provision of comprehensive preparation programs.

THE BURGEONING MIDDLE SCHOOL

For the reasons just presented, the new middle school has grown very rapidly in numbers since 1964. Even then there were numerous senior elementary schools and grades 6-8 junior high schools, and at least one district (Saginaw, Michigan) with grades 5-8 middle schools, but the writer's 1967-68 survey identified only 11 schools (10% of the sample) that had been established as middle school grade organizations before 1960 (Alexander, 1968, p. 14), suggesting the possible existence of some 100. The 1967-68 survey identified the middle school as "a school which combines into one organization and facility certain school years (usually grades 5-8 or 6-8) which have in the past usually been separated in elementary and secondary schools under such plans as the 6-3-3, 6-2-4, and 6-6." A total of 1101 schools were identified as meeting the survey definition and the criteria of having at least three grades and not more than five which included grades 6 and 7. Of a random sample of 110, stratified by USOE regions, 60% had a grades 6-8 organization, and 27% a grades 5-8 one, with the remainder including grades 4-8, 5-7, 6-9, and 4-7 plans.

Several prior surveys (Wright and Greer, 1963; Murphy, 1965; Brod, 1966; Curtis, 1966) had been quite indicative of growing interest in a new middle level organization but had not secured comprehensive benchmark data for comparison. Cuff's survey of 1965-66 was comparable in part: the 1101 middle schools identified in 1967-68 were more than double the number (499) Cuff (1967) had reported for the 1965-66 school year, using a similar grade criterion. Kealy and Compton, both of them graduate assistants/associated with the 1967-68 survey, conducted follow-up surveys of their own, with Kealy (1971) identifying 2298 middle schools in 1967-70, and Compton (1976) 3723 in 1974, both using the 1967-68 criteria. And as shown earlier, the Brooks follow-up survey of 1977 identified 4060 middle schools. These surveys also revealed the growing popularity during the period of the grades 6-8 organization over the 5-8 one.

The surveys fail to show the enthusiasm and also the frustration that went into the many reorganizations of school patterns and programs in the course of the middle school movement, indeed that still go into it. As one who has lived through the years of this movement and participated in many reorganizations, the writer has felt both the enthusiasm and the frustration. The enthusiasm is still there, the movement is still on. The following excellent wording of its status in a 1967 *Wall Street Journal* article (Spivak, 1967) still applies:

> In any event, the middle school seems destined to thrive. Local school boards are finding that it helps satisfy the public's push for educational change, provides a potential for increasing the integration of races, and accords more closely with the way children mature.
>
> Perhaps most important, the middle school offers a chance to experiment with new ways of teaching children during the years when their intellectual curiosity is more often killed than quickened by the classroom. (p. 10)

Probably fortunately, no one grade organization has become *the* middle school, and we can continue to define in relative terms *a middle level*. Data from U.S. Department of Education unpublished sources showed the following number of middle schools in 1983, by grade level organization:

Grade Level	**Number of Schools**	**% of Total**
7-8-9	3,340	29
7-8	2,550	22
6-7-8	3,144	28
5-6-7-8	944	8
Other	1,428	13
TOTAL	11,406	100%

Thus as of fall, 1983, just two decades after the beginning of the chorus of arguments for a new school in the middle, the number of such schools had become significantly higher than that of the now "old" school in the middle, the junior high. In fact only 29% of the total number of middle level schools (all schools of grades 5 through 9) were of the traditional (7-9) junior high organization, although some of the other organizations, especially the two-year ones (grades 7-8) are called "junior high." This writer does not know when and where the term "middle school" was first used in the United States (it is sometimes used for what we consider high school in some foreign countries); it was very rare in our educational literature before 1963, and in fact only came into frequent use in the decade which followed. Kealy's survey of 1969-70 identified 657 named middle schools (of 2298 schools using the grade organization criteria of these surveys). Comparable data are not available for today, but the literature and school listings seem to have generally adopted the name "middle school" for the grades 5-8 and 6-8 organizations although "intermediate" and "junior high" still appear for these combinations. Also, during this period, especially the last few years, the four-year (grades 5-8) middle school has become much less popular, but the two-year unit (grades 7-8) has a surprising hold.

THE CONCEPT AND THE REALITY

The development of the new middle school during the years 1964-1984 provides another opportunity to compare the idea with the reality of an innovative educational organization. There are no thorough studies yielding comprehensive data for the evaluation of the new school, but we can offer some observations, based in part on the studies cited, regarding the implementation of the idea.

The Middle School Concept

The term "middle school concept" has been widely used to identify the beliefs, proposals, and hopes underlying the movement described in this chapter. For example, this brief statement in *The Emergent Middle School* reflects very well the present author's original and continuing concept of the middle school:

> ...a school providing a program planned for a range of older children, preadolescents, and early adolescents that builds upon the elementary school's program for earlier childhood and in turn is built upon by the high school's program for adolescence. Specifically, it focuses on the educational needs of what we have termed the "in-betweenager"....(Alexander *et al.*, 1968).

Each of the many other statements of the concept read by this author usually included one or both of the two interrelated central points in the above statement: (1) a school to promote educational continuity; (2) a school to serve the needs of the age group. In the first section of this chapter, these points were presented, noting their influence in the middle school movement. The translation of these ideas into specific characteristics is in process, but is far from completion.

Desired characteristics of a middle school reflecting the central concept and thereby really becoming its extension, have been stated by many authors. The various statements of characteristics are in considerable agreement. A classification scheme of the following categories will be used for the brief treatment of characteristics that follows: (1) The Transitional Years; (2) Organization for Instruction; (3) Instructional Program; (4) Preparation of Personnel; (5) Planning and Continuity.

The Transitional Years

The movement has definitely confirmed the placement of grade 9 in the high school, with a great reduction in the number of grade 7-9 junior high schools. And grade 6 has become a definite part of the existing middle schools, although many elementary schools still retain it. The critical point in students' attitude toward school seems to be here; a very recent survey of some 8,000 young adolescents (grade 5-9) and more than 10,000 of their parents found that "interest in school declines for both boys and girls" in these grades, and that "the greatest decrease in interest occurs between the 5th and 7th grades" (Search Institute, 1984, p. 10). Since childhood does end earlier and adolescence begins earlier now than in the period of junior high school expansion, the new grade organization definitely seems to match better the transitional years. Furthermore, the widespread use of the term "*middle* school" as the number of junior high school organizations declines, emphasizes the transitional function. A three-level school organization is definitely replacing a two-level one.

Whether, however, the new middle school has as yet developed an adequate transitional program, and whether the vertical articulation is really better, we simply do not know. A survey by McEwin and Clay (1983) in 1981-82 found that a considerable majority of both junior high school (79%) and middle school (84%) principals considered articulation with the high school a problem, but a relatively small one, with similar findings as to articulation with the elementary school. The recent NASSP survey (Valentine *et al.*, 1981, p. 78) of middle level schools identified articulation problems of these types as reported by one-third or more of the principals:

> with the elementary level: pupil promotion policies (33%); subject content/sequence (48%); counseling services (37%): marking/grading systems (34%);
>
> with the secondary level: pupil promotion policies (35%); subject content/sequence (49%).

The writer's own observation of programs, practices, and problems in school districts indicates a continuing very real problem of articulation regardless of whether there is a school in the middle and if so of whether it is a middle or a junior high school. There is still the frequent over-use of the move to the next unit as a motivator *and* barrier that interferes with a smooth progression, and there is still the human tendency to be concerned with one's own province alone. Better curriculum planning and counseling arrangements are helping, and the middle level seems to be justifying its existence in many districts. But certainly more efforts toward articulation, and more evaluation of their results, are desirable.

ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION

Desired features of instructional organization have included interdisciplinary organization, a vertical classification plan other than age/grade, and flexible schedules.

As to interdisciplinary organization, Brooks' survey found that the percentage of schools using a team teaching arrangement (interdisciplinary or intradisciplinary) varied from 15 to 21% by grade (Brooks and Edwards, 1978); in 1967-68 this percentage in the basic curriculum areas had been less than 10% (Alexander, 1968). The McEwin/Clay (1983) survey found that 37% of the middle schools and 24% of the junior high schools reported the use of team teaching in 1981-82. The NASSP survey (Valentine, 1981) found that interdisciplinary team organization was more popular than intradisciplinary, but that one subject organization prevailed at the middle level.

Nongraded, ungraded, multiaged and other organizational departures from the traditional graded pattern have been sought but not widely adopted at the middle level. Both the Brooks (1977) and McEwin/Clay (1981-82) surveys found about 90% of their respective samples using the traditional age-grade organization, although the latter survey did identify a larger percentage of schools using both age-grade and multiaged plans, presumably for different grades and/or curriculum areas.

Modular scheduling had become no more widely used in 1981-82 than in 1967-68, and daily uniform periods were even more common in the middle schools by the latter year, but not as common there as in junior high schools. The use of block schedules was reported in 35%, and team teaching in 17%, of the middle schools, and only in half of those percentages of junior high schools, in the 1981-82 survey.

Instructional Program

The characteristics desired in middle school curriculum and instruction by most middle school proponents have included the use of varied techniques, resources, and groupings; the continuity and functional use of curriculum content in the common knowledge areas; a variety of exploratory courses and special interest activities appropriate to transescents; some form of teacher guidance such as home base and advisor/advisee plans; and the use of independent study and other approaches to increasing self-direction. Little information is available from surveys as to how extensively these ideas have been implemented, although the writer's own observations and reviews of the literature suggest extensive efforts in these regards. It is noteworthy that McEwin and Clay (1983) found that 33% of all the schools in their 1981-82 sample had special interest activity programs, and 36% had advisor-advisee (teacher based) guidance programs, there then being little difference between middle and junior high schools in these respects. Although the data are not fully comparable, it seems likely that provisions for independent study had not increased from the 1967-68 to the 1981-82 surveys.

We must regretfully note that the middle level is highly susceptible to pressures, such as increased requirements of time for academic subjects, aimed at the secondary school; as Melton (1984) put it:

> What bothers me are the misinterpretations, the misapplications, the heavy "laying-on" to the middle level grades of all those things, or at least of many of them on the assumption that if they are good for the high school, they must be good for the middle level school also. (p. 4)

Such "laying-on" can, of course, defeat the whole notion of a transitional program.

Preparation of Personnel

As noted earlier in this chapter, the hopes voiced early in the middle school movement for extensive provision of better, special preparation of personnel for the middle level, simply have not been achieved. Chapter 11 presents data showing the limited provisions made for preparation of teachers and support personnel.

Until middle level schools can select and employ teacher candidates who have special preparation for and commitment to work with transescents, the gaps just noted between the concept and the reality of middle level education will persist. Superior inservice education and sheer necessity are helping to achieve the goals set for middle schools but more leadership and service are critically needed from teacher education institutions and certification agencies.

Planning and Evaluation

Several of the desired characteristics sought in middle schools have to do with planning and evaluation processes. Although the writer has been impressed most favorably with the quality and the innovativeness of planning is some districts, no data are available to indicate the extent to which planning and evaluation really conform to the hopes for a self-renewing school organization. The examples supplied the authors of *The Exemplary Middle School* (Alexander & George, 1981) and those available in other reports, offer much more hope for the continuing development of the middle school.

We can point out in concluding this chapter that the emergence of the middle school may have at least made a reality of the *middle level concept*. This concept provides strong hope for the planning and evaluation needed for continuing improvement.

TOWARD A MIDDLE LEVEL OF SCHOOLING

The hope of many educators for school systems of three levels "each of which has a program and organization appropriate to its place in a sequential educational pattern" (Alexander, 1964) is much nearer realization today. In fact, Toepfer's article (1982) on middle level education in the current *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* observes that the three-level plan is at hand:

> The growing emergence of a nonadversarial middle-grades movement is seen as a means to provide the true three-stage public educational system that has long been awaited by proponents of the junior high concept. The articulation of the three units—early childhood schools, transescent schools, and adolescent schools—appears to be at hand. (p. 995)

The founders of both junior highs and middle schools, indeed all the educators who have worked for a comprehensive, well-articulated program of education below the college level, can rejoice at this implementation of the three-level system. The middle level must now be more fully recognized, supported, and developed in accordance with its rationale.

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IV

Donald H. Eichhorn

The Nature of Transescents

The focal point of schooling for youngsters in the middle years is the dramatic physical, mental, and social changes that are occurring in their lives. During the past twenty years, middle school educators have relied heavily on age and learner characteristics as a basis for action in their attempts to improve schooling for youngsters nearing or attaining pubescence.

Alexander (1968) provided a program relationship when he defined the school. He stated, "The emergent middle school may best be thought of as a phase and program bridging but differing from the childhood and adolescent phases and program" (p. 5). Thus, while middle level schooling should be articulated with the preceding elementary years and the succeeding secondary years, it should be considered unique and distinct.

The emergent middle school erupted in the 1960s largely as a reaction to the growing concern with the program of the junior high school. Early pioneer middle schools, such as those in Centerville, Ohio; Barrington, Illinois; Eagle Grove, Iowa; Mt. Kisco, New York; and Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania, came into existence. There was very little communication between those schools; yet, their rationale and program principles were remarkably similar. Each of these schools seemed to reflect a dissatisfaction with the accepted patterns of education and emphasized a need to restructure program in accordance with the developing body of knowledge related to age and learner characteristics.

School districts placed great emphasis on the characteristics of the age group as they contemplated altering their programs. In 1968, Howard County, Maryland developed a model middle school. Its rationale stated:

> The proposed model middle school is founded upon identified in-

> dividual and societal needs of 'Transescents,' who are pupils usually found in grades 6, 7, and 8, who are in the transitional phase of life between childhood and adolescence. The school is designed to establish a protective environment for its students in which individual physical, psychological, social, intellectual, and emotional needs are cared for.

Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania was an early pioneer district in establishing middle schools. The planning committee wrote (1968) the following as a substantiation for a revised curriculum model:

> It is apparent that the empirical evidence gained over the first seven years of experience locally with the middle school organization confirms the need for curriculum revision. If, in fact, the middle school organization is a new dimension in education based upon more accurate information concerning the physical, social, and psychological characteristics of the transescent, then a new philosophy must be created and a new curriculum designed.

Without question, concern for learner characteristics was a heavy factor in the developing change to middle schools. The nature of the transescent sparked not only the emergence of the middle school concept, but it permeated all aspects of its implementation. In this chapter, attention will be given to its impact.

The concept of transescence was suggested by Eichhorn (1966) as a means of defining the learner. He identified *transescence* as:

> The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence. Since puberty does not occur for all precisely at the same chronological age in human development, the transescent designation is based on the many physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes in body chemistry that appear prior to the time which the body gains a practical degree of stabilization over these complex pubescent changes. (p. 3)

Transescence, as a concept, delineates the essence of middle schools. Thus youngsters in the middle school years are considered neither children nor adolescents, but rather young persons in transition. They are unique persons in need of unique programs. Middle schoolers are not biologically, socially, intellectually, or emotionally either high school or elementary school students. They are similar only in their diversity. Once identified as unique in terms of biological maturation, middle school students' age and learner characteristics became the basis for school programs.

Physical Characteristics

The most evident of the changes which occur at this level are the biological. Pubertal change or lack of it, is striking evidence for transescents that their lives will be dramatically altered.

Middle school educators believed that a youngster's physical development had far reaching implications for the educational process. While pubescence had always been considered as a factor, the middle school movement placed it on "front stage." Strang (1957) indicated:

> Facts about the physical growth preceding and following puberty are important for a number of reasons. Bodily changes, especially if sudden, change the adolescent's body image and self-concept; he may now see himself as an adult with adult privileges and responsibilities. Biological changes give rise to physical sensations; these are translated into emotional states, which, in turn, may be expressed in social behavior. Slow or rapid growth, uneveness of growth, or abnormalities of growth may affect an adolescent's total development. (p. 209)

Therefore, physical development was seen as a vital variable in the instructional equation. Changes occurring as a result of pubescence became important considerations in efforts to improve achievement. Interest span, daydreaming and fantasy were thought of as factors which had to be negated if learning was to be enhanced.

Middle school organization, particularly in establishing schools which included grade six and eliminated grade nine, was greatly affected by the work of J. M. Tanner. Tanner (1962) reported:

> The acceleration of growth is also shown in the marked secular trend in age of menarche...the average ages at menarche from 1930 to 1960 in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Great Britain, and Germany, together with data from entrants to a woman's college in the United States... The trend is remarkably similar in all the series, and over the whole period plotted. Age at menarche has been getting earlier by some 4 months per decade in Western Europe over the period of 1830-1960. (p. 43)

Unquestionably, Tanner significantly influenced middle school eductors. Clearly, one of the justifications for accepting the middle school concept was the realization that, biologically, transescents were attaining maturation at an earlier age.

Some authorities agreed that earlier maturation was occurring; however, they believed that this phenomenon merely indicated that youngsters were biologically precocious. This line of reasoning further indicated that this precocity had little importance educationally. Conversely, others suggested that the trend implied a substantive change, and, in effect, impacted on the educational program in a broad interrelated manner.

Eichhorn (1973) argued that the basis for grouping students ought to be developmental rather than chronological. This position was supported by a significant medical study conducted in conjunction with Dr. Allan Drash of Childrens Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It confirmed the diversity among middle school students of biological maturation in relation to chronological age. For instance, some 14 year old boys showed no secondary sexual development (Level I) while there were 11 year old girls who had achieved complete development of secondary sexual characteristics (Level V).

Table I summarizes these data.

Table I*

Percent and Age of Boys and Girls
Classified in Various Levels of Development of
Secondary Sexual Characteristics (Tanner Units)

	Levels				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Boys					
Percent	16	46	24	10	4
Age in years					
Mean	11.98	12.07	12.78	13.07	13.49
Range	10.8-14.1	10.7-13.8	11.1-14.2	11.8-14.9	13.2-13.8
Girls					
Percent	9	34	29	21	7
Age in years					
Mean	11.2	11.8	12.4	12.11	12.5
Range	10.1-12.1	10.1-13.7	10.8-13.7	11.5-13.9	11.1-14.0

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*The data are from Eichhorn (1973), p. 24.

While the concept of developmental age was accepted as a significant theoretical approach, its contribution remains conceptual rather than pragmatic.

Cognitive Characteristics

Cognitive characteristics of the emerging adolescent learner have been of significant concern for middle school educators as they considered the revitalization of curriculum programs. Toepfer (1969) identified the need. He stated:

> This legacy of reshuffling of form has not given adequate consideration to the specific substance of early secondary education. Such changes have been based largely upon administrative expedience with minimal curricular organization for instructional improvement. As a result the clientele of early adolescent learners in early secondary schools probably has experienced less discrete definition of basic cur-

> ricular experience than those at either the elementary or high school level. This definition should become a primary operational task of the middle school concept. (p. 10)

The early middle school planners relied heavily on the work of stage level psychologists, such as Piaget, for their base for promulgating curricula. Piaget had suggested that cognitive development occurred in a series of stages related to age levels. It was during early adolescence, ages 10-12, that the learner entered what Piaget termed the formal operations stage. This level of cognitive operation was characterized as a time in which students were able to conceptualize and deal with the abstract.

Bruner (1959) suggested:

> After two decades of research, Piaget and his associates have traced the development of thinking to the stage where contemporary Western man reaches his full logical powers. These powers rest in man's capacity, after a long period of biological and cultural preparation, to carry out intellectual operations that appear to be based in the implicit structure of formal logic. Somewhere between 12 and 14 years of age, with the development of ability to reflect upon thought itself, the adolescent begins to show the marks of formal thinking. He is now ready to take his place as a scientist, a thinker, a spinner of theory. (p. 363)

It was assumed by instructional planners that the preponderance of transescents were able to think in the abstract. This interpretation was widely accepted and became the justification for increasing the level of abstractness evident in instruction in the post-sputnik era. High school subjects, such as algebra, were placed in the middle school in an attempt to strengthen content programs. While *some* transescents were able to cope with this cognitive mismatch, *most* students found formal operations instruction frustrating. Epstein (1980) places this problem into perspective. His research indicated that the majority of middle school students are unable to cope with formal operations curricular materials. Table II provides a breakdown of Epstein's findings.

Epstein surmised, "....The table data at ages 12, 13, and 14 years suggest that 76 percent of children will sit through three consecutive years of being unable to handle material presented at the level of formal reasoning. It is known that most of the material prepared for junior high schools uses the level of formal reasoning" (p. 34).

Cognitive characteristics have been used as a basis for structuring program. For the most part, educators have been quick to accept the work of eminent researchers such as Piaget and Epstein. It is evident that, in many instances, educators have not applied adequate scientific inquiry to the work of these researchers. It is not suggested that the work of Piaget and Epstein is invalid. It is merely an expression of the writer's belief that their

Table II
Percentage of Individuals Age 5-18
Attaining Various Cognitive Levels

AGE (YEARS)	Pre-Operational	Concrete Onset	Concrete Mature	Formal Onset	Formal Mature
5	85	15			
6	60	35	5		
7	35	55	10		
8	25	55	20		
9	15	55	30		
10	12	52	35	1	
11	6	49	40	5	
12	5	32	51	12	
13	2	34	44	14	6
14	1	32	43	15	9
15	1	14	53	19	13
16	1	15	54	17	13
17	3	19	47	19	12
18	1	15	50	15	19

findings are complex and that the practitioner should locally determine the relationship of students with the researchers' findings.

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum theorists have developed instructional models for middle school students based upon age and learner characteristics. It is interesting to note that these designs have distinct similarities. Furthermore, these similarities appear to be directly linked with the age and learner characteristics of this age group.

Alexander and associates (1968) suggested a curriculum design that included personal development, skills for continual learning, and organized knowledge. Lounsbury and Vars (1978) recommended a program including core, continuous progress, and a variable component. Eichhorn's (1972) design consisted of learning processes, a knowledge component, and personal development. These models have differences, but their similarities are clearly evident and all relate closely to learner characteristics.

Eichhorn (1980) compared the similarities in these designs. We wrote:

> Each model provides for acquiring essential learning skills in a sequential and individual manner. This aspect is in clear response to the diverse achievement levels, cognitive styles, and varied competencies that characterize learners at this stage. Implicit in each model is an emphasis on structure and sequential learning. There is a recognition that

> maturational and cultural concerns affect the pace of learning for individual students. None of the approaches suggests that students' programs should be rigidly individualized. They do, however, suggest self-pacing designs closely related to group involvement.
>
> Another common element in the models deals with the interrelationships of knowledge. Emphasis is placed in common learnings without regard to the constraints of the various disciplines. There is a recognition that presenting skills and concepts in a practical problem-solving context will enhance learning. There is provision for 'open-ended' curricula. Students are involved in learning in a peer relationship that aids socialization. This approach encourages divergent thinking at the learners' levels of cognition, yet does not expose students to abstract concepts beyond their levels of competence. Each model provides wide opportunities for students to explore content in and out of school walls.
>
> A third dimension in each model is personal development. There are provisions for guidance and counseling through advisory programs, curriculum, and specialized help. Awareness and understanding of pubertal change and its implications for peer relationships are emphasized. Elective and activity programs permit students to explore their interests. (p. 69)

Along with the structural curriculum, middle schools have developed a "hidden" curriculum. This dimension involves the environment of the school and, similar to the structured program, its foundation lies in the nature of the transescent.

The climate for learning and personal development which exists in a school either enhances or deters achievement. Bayley (1955) noted in this regard:

> It becomes evident that the intellectual growth of any child is a resultant of varied and complex factors ... they will include the emotional climate in which he grows; whether he is encouraged or discouraged, whether his drive (or ego involvement) is strong in intellectual thought processes or is directed to other aspects of his life field. And they will include the material environment in which he grows; the opportunities for experience and for learning and the extent to which these opportunities are continuously geared to his capacity to respond. (pp. 813-814)

In the development of an exemplary school environment, middle school educators have created programs which emphasize student interaction with peers and adults. Social-emotional development is vital at this age; yet it is usually accomplished by example rather than by mandate.

CONCLUSION

In the past two decades, the middle school movement has been a remarkable endeavor. It has generated a new concept, implemented this idea, and laid the foundation for future development. Only time can measure its contribution.

The rising tide of criticism generated by various national commissions and their published reports will seriously challenge the middle school's basic premise, i.e., that a school for transescents should be a reflection of the dynamic characteristics of its students.

While the recent national commissions focused on the high school, a "spill-over" effect will inevitably occur. Indeed, it is now visible and promises to create, once more, ineffective middle level programs.

Many of the current trends, such as content acceleration, high school type programs, and an emphasis on unrealistic standards are approaches which have been found to be ineffective in the past.

Middle schools will only remain effective if they continue to devise programs that are clearly in response to the nature of the transescent.

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V

Gordon F. Vars

The Functions of Middle Level Schools

"What are middle schools supposed to do?" This seemingly simple question gets at the heart of a persistent problem in middle level education: defining the purposes or "functions" of the school in the middle. The middle school, like the junior high school from which it evolved, will never achieve its full potential until its proper role in the educational system is clarified. It has been truly said, "If you don't know where you are going, you may end up someplace else." Too many middle schools are "ending up someplace else" today, so it is high time we took another look at the purposes, roles, and functions of the intermediate institution.

To do this, we examine in this chapter an influential early formulation of the functions of the intermediate school. Then we trace the appearance of these functions in major works on middle level education published during the past two decades. Measured against this early standard, most recent proposals are found wanting, hence the call for renewed attention to *all* the functions that were first synthesized by William T. Gruhn in 1940.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The junior high as a separate and distinct intermediate school was already more than thirty years old when William T. Gruhn and Harl R. Douglass published their landmark volume, *The Modern Junior High School* (1947). Revised in 1956 and again in 1971, this work established a philosophical framework for junior high school education that guided both theoreticians and practitioners for many years.

After reviewing factors that contributed to the development of the junior high school, Gruhn and Douglass concluded: "There is one influence . . . which has clearly overshadowed others in the introduction of reorganized schools: namely, the desire of educators, parents, and other citizens for an educational program which would best meet the needs of adolescent youth in America" (1947, p. 41). This general statement of intent provided the context for their definition of the "functions" of the junior high school.

The term *function* was defined as "the responsibility for providing those conditions or elements in the program of a school which will lead most directly to the satisfactory realization of the ultimate aims of education" (pp. 44-45). The authors emphasized that a function is not the same as a goal or an objective, but rather the responsibility *of a school unit* for providing the conditions that facilitate achievement of certain educational goals.

The Gruhn and Douglass statement of functions was based largely on the doctoral study Gruhn carried out under Douglass' direction at the University of North Carolina in 1940. Gruhn examined the literature on junior high school education up to that point and submitted his synthesis of functions to a panel of leaders in secondary education. The six functions that received substantial support appeared in both the 1947 and 1956 editions of the Gruhn and Douglass text. Some wording was changed in the 1971 edition, and the portions italicized below were added (1971, pp. 75-76).

Functions of the Junior High School

I. Integration

To provide learning experiences in which students may use the skills, attitudes, interests, ideals, and understandings previously acquired in such a way that they will become coordinated and integrated into effective and wholesome behavior.

To provide for all students a broad, general, and common education in the basic knowledges and skills which will lead to wholesome, well-integrated behavior, attitudes, interests, ideals, and understandings.

To provide for effective correlation among the studies, learning activities, and extraclass activities of the total program of education.

II. Exploration

To lead students to discover and explore their specialized interests, aptitudes, and abilities as a basis for decisions regarding educational opportunities.

To lead students to discover and explore their specialized interests, aptitudes, and abilities as a basis for present and future vocational decisions.

To stimulate students and provide opportunities for them to develop a continually widening range of cultural, social, civic, avocational, and recreational interests.

To help students identify interests in school which will provide *motivation for them to continue their formal education and to participate in educational activities that are appropriate for their individual growth and development.*

III. Guidance

To assist students to make intelligent decisions regarding present educational activities and opportunities and to prepare them to make future educational decisions.

To assist students to make intelligent decisions regarding present vocational opportunities and to prepare them to make future vocational decisions.

To assist students to make satisfactory mental, emotional, and social adjustments in their growth toward wholesome, well-adjusted personalities.

To stimulate and prepare students to participate as effectively as possible in learning activities so that they may reach the fullest development of their individual interests and talents.

IV. Differentiation

To provide differentiated educational facilities and opportunities suited to the varying backgrounds, interests, aptitudes, abilities, personalities, and needs of students, in order that each student may realize most economically and completely the ultimate aims of education.

To provide learning activities in all areas of the educational program which will be challenging, satisfying, and at a level of achievement appropriate for students of different backgrounds, interests, abilities, and needs.

V. Socialization

To provide increasingly for learning experiences which will prepare students to participate in and contribute to our present complex society and help them adjust to future developments in that society.

To provide learning experiences which will prepare students for effective and satisfying participation as responsible citizens in our democratic society, both at their present level of maturity and later, as adult citizens.

To provide learning experiences which will prepare students for participation in an effective and mature manner in the activities of young adolescents and, later, as older adolescents and adults.

To help students appreciate, understand, and function effectively in a society in which there are individuals with different interests, abilities, backgrounds, and educational and vocational goals.

VI. Articulation

To provide a gradual transition from preadolescent education to an educational program suited to the needs and interests of adolescent boys and girls.

To help students acquire backgrounds and skills which will prepare them to participate effectively in the educational activities and program at their present school level and, later, in the upper secondary school, post-secondary schools, and adult life.

Gruhn and Douglass further emphasized these functions by devoting entire chapters to them in the various editions, such as "Individualizing the School Program" (Differentiation), "The Core Curriculum" (Integration), "The Guidance Program" (Guidance), "Education for Citizenship" (Socialization), and "Extraclass Activities" (Exploration).

In the second edition, the authors expanded their philosophy of junior high school education to include "emphasis on all aspects of child growth," "general rather than specialized education," "preparation in basic skills and knowledge," and "the school as a community" (1956, pp. 27-30). But it was the functions that were widely quoted in professional literature and in statements of philosophy in individual junior high schools.

For example, most of the Gruhn and Douglass concepts were embodied in nine statements of functions set forth in *The Junior High School Program*, a monograph published in 1958 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. While not mentioning integration directly, the writers advocated a core program based on "common problems, needs, concerns, and interests of early adolescents and upon the demands, pressures, and forces of society which impinge upon the daily living of these young people" (Southern Association, 1958, p. 42).

In a 1961 textbook entitled *Modern Education for the Junior High School Years*, William Van Til, Gordon F. Vars, and John H. Lounsbury described a 1954 study by Lounsbury of the purposes, functions, and characteristics of the junior high school program. Twenty-four statements derived from the literature were submitted to two groups, 212 principals of randomly-selected junior high schools and 57 supervisors or professors of education who had no direct connection with a junior high. Of the fifteen functions, purposes, or characteristics rated valid by the panels, all but four were variations on the six functions identified by Gruhn and Douglass (1961, p. 36).

The middle school movement was already under way when the second edition of the Van Til book appeared in 1967. The authors briefly reviewed the arguments for including younger students in the intermediate school unit, and acknowledged that a middle school of grades six, seven, and eight might be appropriate "in some situations" (1967, p. 547).

In his 1967 book, Samuel H. Popper eschewed even this grudging acceptance of a new alignment of grade levels, asserting that this tampering with grade structure might divert the intermediate school from its legitimate goal (p. 297). Proclaiming that "the Junior High School *is* institutionally America's Middle School" (p. xi), Popper summarized his examination of the history and sociology of the junior high school as an institution in the following words:

> The differentiated function — hence, the paramount goal — of the American middle school is to intervene protectively in the process of education which was begun in the elementary school, mediate between the human condition at the onset of adolescence and the pressures of culture, and continue the general education of early adolescents with a curriculum applied in a psycho-social environment which is functional for learning at this stage of socialization (p. 282).

Within this context, Popper stated that Gruhn's six manifest functions were as valid then as when first formulated.

The organizational debate between advocates of the junior high school of grades 7-8-9 and the middle school of grades 6-7-8 or 5-6-7-8 waged hot and heavy during the 1960's. In the midst of this ferment, two books appeared that addressed both audiences.

In *The Intermediate Schools,* Leslie W. Kindred and associates (1968) asserted that both types of intermediate schools had similar philosophies and purposes. A second "hybrid" publication was *The Junior High and Middle School* by Alvin W. Howard and George C. Stoumbis (1970). It dealt primarily with the junior high school but contained sections devoted specifically to the middle school. Both of these texts quoted the Gruhn and Douglass functions, but did not elaborate on all of them.

THE GRUHN AND DOUGLASS FUNCTIONS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS

Table I shows at a glance the treatment the Gruhn and Douglass functions received in 14 major publications on middle school education. Note that only two of these works quoted the Gruhn and Douglass functions, although all dealt with them either directly or indirectly.

Two of the earliest publications to argue for a middle school, as distinct and different from the junior high school, came from the Educational Facilities Laboratories, a nonprofit corporation established by the Ford Foundation. *Middle School: A Report of Two Conferences in Mt. Kisco on the Definition of Its Purpose, Its Spirit, and Its Shape* (1962), gave differentiation the highest priority, stating:

> While the conference had no official theme other than the plannng of a new school, the touchstone to which the participants repeatedly returned was not the class of twenty-five or thirty but the individual student, *his* program, *his* activities, *his* environment (1962, p.8).

Table 1
TREATMENT OF THE GRUHN AND DOUGLASS FUNCTIONS IN MAJOR PUBLICATIONS ON MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION

Publication	Functions Quoted	Integration	Exploration	Guidance	Differentiation	Socialization	Articulation
1. EFL (1962)	-	I	-	S	S	S	-
2. EFL (1965)	-	-	-	-	S	-	-
3. Eichhorn (1966)	-	S	I	E	S	S	S
4. Alexander et al. (1968)	-	I	S	S	S	I	S
5. Moss (1969)	All	E	S	E	E	S	S
6. Hansen & Hearn (1971)	Explo.	E	E	E	E	I	S
7. Overly et al. (1972)	-	I	S	-	E	I	-
8. ASCD (1975)	-	S	S	S	S	S	S
9. Kindred et al. (1976)	-	S	S	S	E	S	S
10. Curtis & Bidwell (1977)	-	S	S	S	S	S	S
11. Lounsbury & Vars (1978)	-	E	E	S	E	S	-
12. Wiles & Bondi (1981)	All	S	S	S	I	S	S
13. Alexander & George (1981)	-	E	S	E	E	-	S
14. NMSA (1982)	-	-	S	S	S	-	-

Key: E - Extensive (1 chapter or more)   S - Some   I - Implied only   - None or virtually none

Incidentally, conference participants included illustrious educators, such as Robert H. Anderson and Jerome Bruner from Harvard; Lawrence Cremin from Teachers College, Columbia; Roy Larmee from the University of Chicago; and Arthur G. Miller from Boston University, as well as architects and leadership personnel from the Bedford (NY) Public Schools. The Fox Lane Middle School which was built from their specifications was for years cited as a model both in architecture and in program. More than twenty years later the recommendations of this stellar group still sound "far out" when compared with the way most middle schools operate.

The second EFL publication, *Middle Schools* by Judith Murphy (1965), was primarily a description of innovative middle school and junior high school buildings. The introductory rationale drew on the Mt. Kisco report and a variety of publications and working papers, generally supporting the idea that the middle school was something new and different from the junior high school.

The middle school received one of its earliest and most thoughtful formulations in 1966 in Donald H. Eichhorn's *The Middle School*. The author based his recommendations both on a careful analysis of the characteristics and needs of 10 to 14-year-old students, which he labeled "transescents," and also on contemporary cultural forces. The Gruhn and Douglass functions were not cited directly, but they all were evident in the middle school program Eichhorn proposed. The guidance function is an integral part of the total program, he said, and instructional personnel bear the basic responsibility. Student activities and other "socialization programs" were to be both "guidance-related" and to provide for exploration. Socialization also was to be promoted by grouping students according to maturational factors, rather than age, and by establishing a learning climate that exemplified democracy.

Integration was provided by interrelating fine arts, the practical arts, physical education, and the cultural facets of the social studies in a "physical-cultural curriculum." Likewise in the proposed "analytical curriculum" the emphasis would be on thought processes common to language, mathematics, social studies, and science, (integration) as well as on individual student progress (differentiation). Articulation received passing mention in connection with an orientation day for students about to enter the middle school.

Even more influential in giving direction to the middle school movement was a 1968 publication, *The Emergent Middle School*, by William M. Alexander and associates. The authors' summary of the five aims of the middle school included four of the Gruhn and Douglass functions: articulation, differentiation, exploration, and guidance (1968, p.19). The proposed curriculum plan emphasized guidance, differentiation, and exploration.

Socialization received virtually no specific attention. The authors described interdisciplinary teaming and block-time programs, which are means of facilitating integration. On the other hand, they said that the teacher must become a subject specialist in order to teach "the underlying principles and the ways of knowing in the areas of organized learning" (1968, p. 84). This would seem to run counter to the concept of integration.

In contrast, Theodore C. Moss came out squarely for a core curriculum in his book *Middle School*, published in 1969. The integration function was implied, but guidance, articulation, and socialization were explicitly attributed to the core program. Differentiation was to be accomplished in the Moss design through such approaches as tracking, nongraded programs, special classes for the gifted, and highly individualized skills instruction using programmed materials. A full chapter was devoted to guidance, with roles delineated for core teachers, non-core teachers, and the guidance specialist.

Exploration as a separate function received little direct attention from Moss. Indeed, he said that interest groups that are not part of an academic subject area should meet outside of class time — before or after school, or during the lunch period. One exploratory area, home economics, was even dismissed as unnecessary in the middle school curriculum, except perhaps on a part-time basis (p. 142). The author asserted that the total curriculum should foster general education for all students, not exploration (p. 268). Thus, despite quoting the Gruhn and Douglass functions, Moss proposed a program that gave them unequal attention.

The Gruhn and Douglass functions were mentioned but not quoted in full in *The Middle School Program* by John H. Hansen and Arthur C. Hearn, published in 1971. Support for integration was implied in a number of places, notably in discussing correlation, fusion, block-time, and core. A block of time in which students are with the same teacher two or three periods also was viewed as an aid to students in making the transition from elementary to high school (articulation). Exploration was promoted and "Exploration Courses" were described in a separate chapter.

Hansen and Hearn asserted that guidance is a responsibility of every staff member. The guidance roles of teachers and counselors were delineated and useful guidance materials were described. Differentiation was to be accomplished primarily through the use of Learning Activity Packages, which were described in some detail in a separate chapter. Socialization as a function was implied in the chapter on student activities, especially the discussion of school parties. Aimed at teachers rather than administrators, this book dealt with all of the functions, with emphasis on those of most importance to those who teach at the middle level, regardless of what grades are included or what name the school bears.

Meeting the needs of each individual as a person was the focus of the brief book by Donald E. Overly, Jon Rye Kinghorn, and Richard L. Preston entitled *The Middle School: Humanizing Education for Youth* (1972). The Gruhn and Douglass functions were not mentioned in this text, but differentiation was addressed in chapters on assessment and evaluation, independent study and "open laboratories", continuous progress, and "Learning How to Learn Independence and Self-Reliance." The authors favored team teaching and block scheduling, which implied some support for integration. Apparently they saw socialization as one of the outcomes of student activities and the small "inquiry groups" they proposed. Guidance as a specific function was not addressed, despite the emphasis on the individual student, and exploration was mentioned only briefly. Articulation was not mentioned at all. The Overly work is essentially a single-theme book of rather narrow focus.

The year 1975 saw the publication of *The Middle School We Need,* edited by Thomas E. Gatewood and Charles A. Dilg for the Working Group on the Emerging Adolescent Learner of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Recommendations and possible implications for middle school programs were derived from a brief review of the physical, intellectual, and "personality" development of the emerging adolescent. All the Gruhn and Douglass functions were included, either explicitly or by implication, although there was no mention of either Gruhn or Douglass in the publication.

Leslie W. Kindred and associates published *The Middle School Curriculum: A Practitioner's Handbook,* in 1976. They made no reference to the Gruhn and Douglass functions, but a number of them may be inferred from their list of "characteristics of a middle school"; namely, articulation, exploration, and differentiation. These functions also were implicit in the authors' discussion of purposes and objectives. The discussion of block-of-time classes indicated some support for integration, and socialization was listed as one of the desirable outcomes of the activity program. Guidance received only passing mention, but differentiation was the focus of two chapters, one on individualizing instruction and the other on "technology." The latter discussed a variety of instructional systems and media. A balanced attention to all functions is not evident in this book.

A somewhat broader perspective is implied in the title Thomas E. Curtis and Wilma W. Bidwell chose for their 1977 book: *Curriculum and Instruction for Emerging Adolescents.* The authors made no mention of the Gruhn and Douglass functions, but did share their perceptions of the primary functions of the institution, along with several "corollaries." They emphasized "personalization of instruction," which involved "systematic meeting of the needs, purposes, and desires of individuals" (p. 5). Concern for differentiation thus permeated this book. Articulation and guidance were implied in the authors' statement of primary functions and elaborated on in later chapters on curriculum and on the varied roles of the teacher. Integration of the disciplines was advocated, with team teaching, core and correlation suggested as means. Exploration and guidance were dealt with in a chapter on "individual enrichment," and referred to in a number of other places. Socialization, too, was mentioned at various places throughout the book, but not given extensive treatment in any one place. Thus the Gruhn and Douglass functions permeated the Curtis and Bidwell book, but none were treated in much depth.

A small volume that proposed *A Curriculum for the Middle School Years* appeared in 1978, written by John H. Lounsbury and Gordon F. Vars. No reference was made to the Gruhn and Douglass functions, but several of them received fairly extensive treatment. A core program was recommended to provide for integration, guidance, and differentiation. Differentiation also was the primary function of the "continuous progress component." The so-called "variable component" provided for exploration, socialization, and differentiation. Articulation received no attention in this monograph.

In 1981 Jon Wiles and Joseph Bondi published *The Essential Middle School,* designed to take the reader through the steps that school personnel might follow in planning a middle school. They quoted the Gruhn and Douglass functions but did not devote a full chapter to any one of them. All six functions were reflected in the implications for the middle school that they drew from an analysis of the characteristics of emerging adolescents. Curriculum integration was implied in their discussion of interdisciplinary teaming, and they included examples of interdisciplinary units. Guidance, articulation, and "exploratory studies" were given some direct attention, and socialization was considered as part of "education for social competence." Differentiation was implied in the discussion of grouping and in the description of varied instructional activities. Thus all the functions were considered, albeit briefly.

No doubt the definitive volume on middle school education to date is *The Exemplary Middle School* by William M. Alexander and Paul S. George (1981). Based on an examination of programs and practices in a nationwide sample of outstanding middle schools, the book addressed virtually all aspects of middle school education. The middle school was viewed as a "bridging school," hence the stress on both vertical and horizontal articulation. No mention was made of the Gruhn and Douglass functions, but much attention was given to guidance, exploration, and differentiation. Curriculum integration was addressed in a chapter on interdisciplinary team organization, as well as in discussion of interdisciplinary and core approaches to curriculum. Differentiation was considered primarily with respect to student grouping, with the authors favoring multi-age grouping. Socialization *per se* received little specific attention. Thus, despite the authors' attempt to be comprehensive, they neglected a function that would appear at the top of the list for most middle school students.

The latest attempt to define the purposes and functions of the middle school was a small booklet from the National Middle School Association entitled *This We Believe* (1982). Prepared by a small group of middle school educators, it identified the "essential" elements of a "true" middle school, all of which must be present if a school claims to be effective in educating transescents. No reference was made to the Gruhn and Douglass functions, and only guidance and exploration were addressed directly. Differentiation was to be provided through varied instructional strategies, continuous progress programs, and evaluation procedures centered on individual student uniqueness. Articulation, integration, and socialization were not considered in this position statement.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A number of conclusions may be drawn from this brief review of publications on junior high and middle school education. First, too few of these works present clear statements of the rationale, purposes, and functions of a middle level school, and even fewer treat all of them in equal depth.

Second, the Gruhn and Douglass functions have provided an organizing focus for a number of major pronouncements dealing with junior high school education. Such functions as articulation, differentation, guidance, and exploration have become widely accepted as functions of the intermediate school unit, appearing in publications dealing with junior high schools, middle schools, or both.

Other functions have received less consistent attention, both in degree of emphasis and in recommended approaches. Whereas Gruhn and Douglass clearly favored the core approach to integration, some writers, especially those dealing with the middle school, promoted interdisciplinary teaming. Others avoided taking a stand, merely listing the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches. In general, most later writers seemed uncommitted to the development of the well-integrated *person* as depicted in the Gruhn and Douglass statement. This emphasis was missing even in the Overly book aimed at "humanizing education" and in the Curtis and Bidwell book that focused on "personalization."

Socialization is another function that received surprisingly little direct attention in more recent publications. Maybe it was assumed that interpersonal relations would be dealt with in guidance programs and that citizenship would be taught in social studies classes. Certainly socialization is one of the outcomes of well-planned student activities, but these programs need strong justification in these times of budget cutbacks and emphasis on academics.

Middle level educators should keep in mind all six functions — integration, exploration, guidance, differentiation, socialization, and articulation. Otherwise programs may become unbalanced or some vital aspects of middle level education may be neglected.

Moreover, even these six functions are incomplete unless viewed within the context of a sound educational philosophy. The following "points of view" from the 1971 edition of the Gruhn and Douglass text provide this needed perspective. They should be posted prominently, along with the list of functions, in every middle level administrative and faculty office in the land!

1. The junior high/middle school should offer an educational program which is designed for the needs, interests, and abilities of a particular age group — the young adolescents.

2. The junior high/middle school should challenge the intellectual abilities and interests of young adolescents by attracting well-qualified teachers, introducing new studies, and providing a program with more depth than is appropriate for pupils in the elementary school.

3. The junior high/middle school should continue instruction begun in the elementary grades in the fundamental skills and basic knowledge which are essential to further learning, with emphasis on teaching them in more functional situations and in greater depth appropriate for young adolescents.

4. The junior high/middle school should be concerned with all aspects of child growth and development — the intellectual, physical, emotional, character, citizenship, social, personal, and cultural.

5. The junior high/middle school should prepare young adolescents for more independence, self-responsibility, and leadership as they participate increasingly in larger and more complex social groups and in the life of a larger school and civic community.

6. The junior high/middle school should emphasize general education for all pupils rather than specialized teaching directed toward particular educational and vocational goals. (Adapted from Gruhn and Douglass, 1971, pp. 61-68.)

Thus present-day middle level educators can tap the wisdom of their predecessors who developed the junior high school, and join in the continuing quest for the best possible education for youngsters who are passing through the critical in-between years.

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VI

Paul S. George

Middle School Instructional Organization: An Emerging Consensus

The emergence and acceptance of a third phase of schooling, a middle level, has been one of the most significant changes in American education in the twentieth century. In spite of the terrible social upheaval of those years, and the incredible resistance to real change that is characteristic of our educational system, the junior high school and the middle school have successfully built a permanent bridge between elementary and high school education in America. In 1984, few voices are raised in opposition to the reality of middle level education. More important, educators appear to be moving increasingly, even if phlegmatically, toward a national consensus on the nature of effective education for the older children and young adolescents in these middle level schools.

WHY IS THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ORGANIZED THE WAY IT IS?

Program Focus.

An ever-growing group of teachers, parents, school administrators, university educators and scholars in the area of child development assert that education at the middle level must meet the twin challenges of being unique and transitional. Schools for young adolescents must, it is argued, offer a program that is special. This program must differ from what children receive in elementary school and what high school youth encounter. Such a program must, nevertheless, lead smoothly and continuously from the elementary school on to the high school, so that there is one whole educational fabric from entry into kindergarten through high school graduation.

Educational programs for middle level students must be responsive to the special developmental characteristics of that age group. This responsibility demands a program that is more than an upward extension of the elementary school or a downward intrusion of the high school program.

Group Solidarity

Middle level schools must be organized in a way that meets the twin psycho-social goals of early adolescent developement. These schools must help early adolescents develop a conscious sense of their individual uniqueness. Successful schools for early adolescents must also organize in ways that lead students to a balancing sense of solidarity with the ideals of our society (Lipsitz, 1984). Our schools fail when either of these developmental needs are slighted.

For most of the last twenty years, the emphasis in middle schools focused almost exclusively on the first of these needs, a sense of individual uniqueness. This emphasis was, understandably, a reaction to what was perceived as the stultifying sameness of the typical junior high school program. Individualized instruction was almost mandated, it seems, as the acceptable teaching strategy for middle school students in the decades of the sixties and seventies. Exploration and special interest activities were the heart of the curriculum, with little or no status attached to what some have described as common learnings. Standardized assessment was relatively unknown. Professional educators seemed to absorb themselves in discussions of the uniqueness of each child and the special need for improving the self esteem, or self concept, of middle level students.

All of this activity was, of course, desirable. The problem was that the enthusiasm which it engendered left educators with no energy to attend to the second and equally important goal of early adolescent development, the sense of solidarity with positive societal goals and norms. Educators were, of course, not alone in this; the entire American society seemed dedicated, during those years, to the enhancement of the individual almost without regard to the consequences of social cohesiveness. Concepts like duty, responsibility, self discipline and respect for others were not very popular anywhere in America.

I believe that Americans have begun to recognize the negative aspects of an overemphasis on individual uniqueness, both socially and educationally. Our society and our schools have begun to redress this imbalance, moving toward a recognition of the importance of a sense of community and what is required to achieve it. Life in a pluralistic democracy, we now recognize more clearly, requires a set of fundamental commitments and skills. Life in the schools of such a society requires that we value and inculcate a parallel set of skills and commitments in ourselves and our students.

Middle school students cannot develop a sense of solidarity with the ideals of our society unless group solidarity is one of the main goals of the school program. Hence, during the next decade, I believe that middle level schools will place an increasing emphasis on organizing the school in a manner calculated to bring about the reality of group involvement. Without ignoring the need for a sense of individual uniqueness, middle schools must capitalize on the readiness of their students to become important members of important groups.

Students, then, need to develop a sense of group solidarity to function effectively as citizens in our society. The society's future depends, in part, on a new generation of citizens who have developed a mature commitment to the goals of the society as a whole. But there is still another reason why middle level schools must be organized to include an emphasis of group involvement.

Educational Productivity

A decade's worth of research on productivity, in corporations and schools, identifies the concept of group involvement as one of the central factors in improving school effectiveness and raising student achievement (George, 1983). Institutions of almost any type, it appears, function far more effectively when they are organized so that the individuals within them feel known and cared about, and when they see themselves as important members of an important group. Beginning over a decade ago, economists and students of corporate management discovered that the most successful corporations in America, Japan and elsewhere were companies in which people were valued as highly as profits. These companies were organized in a way that made each company, regardless of the size or type of product, seem more like an extended family than an impersonal factory. For productive corporations, a genuine sense of community is paramount.

For productive schools, this same sense of community is central. Educational researchers report that schools which manage to overcome barriers to achievement which other schools find insurmountable are schools where teachers and students see themselves as important members of the same important group. In quality schools, caring counts.

One well known study of junior high schools in inner city London (Michael Rutter and colleagues, 1979), documented this importance of group solidarity to the success of the school. Rutter identified a number of group involvement factors that affected school achievement, delinquency, truancy, and other indicators of school success of failure. These researchers concluded, after four years of study, that the crucial difference between an effective school and one that is less so is the degree to which the school attends to the social side of learning. It is critically important, says Rutter, that teachers and students come to see themselves as part of the same school group, the same team. It is this unity, school spirit if you prefer, which encourages faculty and students to work together for common purposes in and outside the classroom. It is this unity, or group involvement, which makes it more likely that the students will share the educational perspective of the faculty, and what, therefore, leads to higher academic achievement.

Following an intensive study of the characteristics of the most successful American schools for young adolescents, Joan Lipsitz (1984) concluded that, among others, one of the most important themes in each of these schools is that "they are organized in ways that permit small, knowable communities of people in familiar, personalized space" (p. 180). Each of the unusually successful schools Lipsitz studied was organized in a unique way that permitted teachers and students to come to know and to care about each other. In these schools, caring is emphasized because the students deserve it. It just so happens that academic achievement improved as well.

In the past, thinking of the school solely as a place for the acquisition of academic learning resulted in young adolescents attending a school organized very differently than those Lipsitz described. Two centuries ago, when American universities were being established, they looked to Europe for their models. Later, the more modern American senior high school, seeking to prepare students for the university, decided to organize in a manner that was as similar as possible to the institutions of higher education to which their graduates would be sent. Unfortunately, when the junior high school emerged in the early years of this century, it also adopted the model of the institution immediately above it on the academic ladder. The result of all this institutional mimicry was that mid-twentieth century American junior high school students ended up attending schools designed very much like medieval German and Italian universities. These were schools for the Middle Ages, not for middle school ages.

There may have been a time when this traditional organization worked well enough for young adolescents, though there is no evidence to suggest that such a strategy was any more effective in the past than it is now. When American life was simpler, less pluralistic, rural, even slower, such a school plan may have been productive. It seems clear now, however, that a school organized for medieval university students is inappropriate for educating middle school youth in the last years of the twentieth century. This traditional secondary school organization requires far more maturity, responsibility and self-discipline than most of today's middle and junior high students can muster. In a society that provides far less positive structure and support than it once did, schools cannot also lack structure. In many ways, therefore, effective middle schools are far more structured than the school organizations they are rapidly replacing.

Even though most educators think of the traditional junior high school as a highly structured institution, it usually is not. Beyond the walls of individual classrooms and the rule-enforcing school office, there is very little supportive structure in these schools to which maturing adolescents can cling as they move toward independence and autonomy. Because such schools are organized in ways appropriate for far older and more mature students, teachers do not often come to know students nearly as personally as they might. Teachers must, therefore, rely on rules and punishments far more frequently.

This is not to say, however, that teachers and administrators in traditional junior high schools are less student-oriented or more rigid, as some have supposed. What is more likely is that these educators are as enlightened, caring, and well-intentioned as anyone has a right to expect. They happen to be teaching, or administering, in a school organization which makes certain important things very difficult to accomplish. While it may be an overstatement to say that students and educators in these schools are prisoners of the organization, it is interesting to recall Winston Churchill's warning that "we shape our institutions and thereafter they shape us."

Contemporary middle school organization is, therefore, no accident; it is a response to several important demands. Exemplary middle schools must provide a program geared to the needs of early adolescents, offering a unique program which fits smoothly into the K-12 spectrum. Such schools must guarantee students the opportunity to develop a sense of their own uniqueness, while enabling them to also develop a commitment to the values and goals of the larger adult society. Finally, effective middle schools must be organized in a way that produces results in the primary area of concern, learning. Middle school organization must truly provide a structure in which both quality and caring can count.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO ORGANIZE A MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOL?

Simply put, the best organization is the type that reaches the goals which fit the needs middle school students manifest. Teachers in their classrooms and counselors in their offices must still find ways to treat students as individuals. The curriculum must continue to provide opportunities for exploration and enrichment even while attempting to accomplish certain basic learnings for all students. All of this, however, must be conducted in the context of a school organization which reduces the anonymity and amorphousness that otherwise run rampant in large schools. We know how to do this.

Logic, twenty years worth of practitioners' experience in successful schools across the nation, and a slowly accumulating mass of research make it clear that we have passed the point where effective middle level schools can be organized in any way that seems comfortable. We can no longer, in good conscience, acceed to the wishes of those who would rather not go to the trouble of making significant changes in school organization for young adolescents simply because the teachers do not want to move their classrooms.

Interdisciplinary Team Organization: How Does It Work?

Let me say it straightforwardly. I believe that middle schools that do not have teachers and students organized on interdisciplinary teams are providing less than the best possible education for their students. I also believe that the staff members of such schools are working harder but less effectively than they might if organized as teams. Self-contained classrooms belong, for the most part, in elementary schools. The functions of subject departments can be handled by committees which meet on a monthly basis; organizing teachers by academic disciplines belongs in the high school. The interdisciplinary team organization is the only acceptable method for grouping teachers and students on a schoolwide basis in middle and junior high schools. There is no evidence to the contrary.

While teams of teachers are present at all levels or schooling, the interdisciplinary team organization is becoming a central characteristic of middle and junior high schools (McEwin and Clay, 1983). The team organization is unique in that it is distinctly different from either the elementary school self-contained classroom or the high school department. It is transitional, however, in that it leads students, smoothly and gradually, from dependence on one teacher to the independence required in the high school.

The essence of the team organization is sharing. An interdisciplinary team organization is a group of teachers representing more than one subject area who share the same students, the same space, and same schedule. On some teams they may share the responsibility for teaching the basic subjects to their students, but on most teams this is not the case. The most absolutely essential ingredient of the interdisciplinary team organization is that the teachers share the same students. If you and I were on a team together, it would mean, for example, that sometime during the day, the students that I teach also come next door to you for instruction in one of the basic academic areas. Being right next door or on the same hallway is almost essential. Sharing the same schedule is also important. Sometimes, teachers on teams also share in the teaching of two or more of the subjects in the basic academic program. More often, however, they simply share an interest in the total academic program in which their common students are involved.

So, an interdisciplinary team organization is one in which a group of two to five teachers share, to the degree possible, the same students, space, schedule, and subjects in the curriculum. That's what an interdisciplinary team organization is. There are also some things that it definitely is not. A team is not a department in which the teachers, usually in a junior or senior high, teach the same subject to different pupils. In a department the teachers are able to share the same subject, but little else. An interdisciplinary team organization is not the same as team teaching; teachers on an interdisciplinary team may engage in team teaching or they may not. The interdisciplinary team organization is a way of deploying teachers and students; it is not just a teaching method. It is much more than that.

A team or group, or cluster, whatever name is used to identify this organization of teachers and students, may vary considerably in size and in the responsibilities accepted by the teachers. Teams of from two to five teachers may teach from 60 to 150 students. One teacher seldom teaches more than one subject, but could teach as many as five. Interdisciplinary team organization, then, means a group or cluster of teachers who share the same students, space, and schedule and who teach, in one way or another, the major subjects in the basic academic program of the students on the team. This definition of an interdisciplinary team organization implies a series of important functions. An examination of the ways in which teams function in schools, the areas of team life that seem most imporatant to good schools, is central to comprehending the core of a good middle level school.

Educators with team experience have identified four different areas of team life, four different ways in which teachers and students work together to accomplish the tasks of schooling more effectively and satisfactorily. The areas of teaming are: organization, community, instruction, and administration.

When teams are organized as described above, effectiveness improves in several ways. The most important advantage that the team organization offers to teachers is the almost guaranteed improvements in discipline that will result. Sharing the same students, space, and schedule means teachers can work together on what is often a big problem...student behavior. In fact, hundreds of teachers attest to the significant improvements in students behavior that followed the implementation of a team organization in their schools. There are many reasons why this is so. For now, it is important to point out that one key to improving discipline rests with the effort the teachers on the team put into developing and enforcing team norms.

Most middle school educators know that early adolescents benefit from the consistency that follows from having expectations that are the same in more than one teacher's classroom. When students are confronted with the same rules in four or five classrooms every day, they are much more likely to remember them and to observe them. In fact, many educators are beginning to agree that, with middle school and junior high students especially, structure is a very important requirement for a successful educational experience; warm, supportive, consistent, firm but flexible structure.

On teams, teachers discover that the development and implementation of team procedures pays off in big dividends for the teachers' state of mind. In many middle level schools across the country, pupils have difficulty following directions and in learning to use the procedures that teachers prefer. When teams of teachers pay attention to such details, teams of students are much more likely to do the same. When students are asked to use the same heading, for example, on their papers in every class on the team, teachers discover that the continuing requests from four teachers soon gets the message through.

Teachers can also use the team to benefit from working together with parents. Home-school relationships improve considerably when parent contacts and conferences are team affairs. Parents quickly learn that their children are being supervised by an organized group of teachers and others. Conferences, as a result, are usually much more pleasant for the teachers involved, and frequently more satisfying for parents. Many teams of teachers also discover that team conferences with students often can be an extremely good use of their time.

There are a host of other managerial kinds of tasks, like designing and changing student schedules, that the team organization permits teachers to accomplish in ways that improve the school lives of everyone involved. Teaming teachers also report that working together to interface with school specialists is another way that the organization of the team can be used effectively, formally or informally.

But teams can and should be more than that; a team should be an affective force as well. I believe that in today's whirlwind society, characterized too often by anonymity, mobility, and loneliness, schools must be organized on a human scale. Pupils need structure in their interpersonal lives in school as well as in their academic program. Large schools must be organized so that they are able to continue to offer their exciting programs most effectively, but in a framework that permits students to restrict their interactions to a manageable number.

The interdisciplinary team organization permits and encourages students and teachers to develop a sense of place, of territory, of turf. Personal space is important to all of us, but especially to students whose lives are often turbulent in so many other ways. A place to begin and end the day, to own at least temporarily, is an important outcome of team organization.

The team also permits the development of the sense of community described earlier, seeing oneself as a part of a group that is small enough to identify with is an important part of the team life, provided easily, as a consequence the physical proximity of the team of teachers' classrooms. Few children or early adolescent students are able to identify with a total school, especially if there are a thousand or more students in attendance. A team is much easier to belong to. With belonging comes a sense of ownership, a firm sense of involvement and responsibility that may be the most important thing our students ever learn—or don't learn.

There is no substitute for being known as a person. In a world where adults must tolerate being known as a number, the school years must build a foundation of strength and stability that comes only from the power of rich, real interpersonal relationships. I believe that no child can succeed in school or in life without the sense of personal value that comes with being a special person in a special group. Neither can you and I.

The sense of community upon which all of this is based must be nurtured. It does not come without attention and serious effort, and administrative encouragement and participation are essential. Many of the activities and attitudes necessary to cultivate these conditions may be beyond what some of us are used to, but the results will reward all who can respond to the school conditions of today, rather than yearning for the tranquil days of yesteryear.

The third area of team life is the one most educators unfamiliar with team organization usually think of first. Much of the misunderstanding of and resistance to the interdisciplinary team organization has come from the erroneous assumption that team teaching and team organization are synonymous. Teamed instruction in many varieties may be an important part of the lives of teachers on interdisciplinary teams. It may even be the most important part of some teams, but it is only one part.

On most teams, teachers report that the truly interdisciplinary units that come to mind when the term "team teaching" is mentioned are produced only once or twice a year. More often, the teachers have the autonomy to make some of the decisions on how the teaching assignments on the team will be handled. After initial assignments are made at the district or school level, teachers on many teams have some leeway about who will teach what subjects to whom. Teams of teachers also collaborate in the decisions about ability grouping, about instructional resources, about the curriculum, and they participate in the testing of their students and in the evaluation of the instructional program on the team.

Finally, on teams that are functioning fully, teachers play an important role, through the team, in the decisions that affect their professional lives and the experiences of their students in the school. School principals frequently discover that large modern schools are too complex for one person to administer successfully, and that involving teachers in making decisions, when it is appropriate to do so, results in more ownership of school life by the faculty.

Most often, school administrators work with the faculty in setting goals, establishing school policies that result from those goals, and solving problems that are common to all of the team in the school. Implementing any new policies or attempted solutions to problems almost always goes better when there has been widespread involvement in the formulations of the policies or solutions. Teams make this possible.

Many schools have found that one way to make this happen is through the establishment of some sort of faculty and administrator steering committee. Whatever the name for such a group, it represents each team in the school, special area teachers, guidance people, and the administration. Usually on a once weekly basis this group meets to discuss school policies and review common problems. The principal is most often in charge of the agenda and the meeting, but everyone gets involved.

Judgments made by this group are shared the next day with the entire faculty through team meetings. When it is appropriate, the faculty may vote on an issue. More often, the school administrators make the final decisions about what actions to take.

The interdisciplinary team organization is, then, the central program component of exemplary middle level schools. Experience and research indicate, now, that when this process is implemented effectively, tremendous benefits accrue to the whole school, staff and students. There are, however, important requirements for successful team operation.

Requirements for Successful Team Organization

Among those requirements, several must be highlighted, and the first of these is the absolute essential of organizing a group of teachers who share a common group of students, balanced to reflect the character of the whole school. The teachers on the team should also be balanced, in terms of factors like age, sex, race, preparation, and experience. Having the classrooms of team members as close together as possible is extremely important. Teacher communication, student behavior management, efficient use of time, and any number of other factors are at least partially dependent on proximity for their effectiveness.

Planning time for team members is another crucial factor in the success of the team. Without time together to plan, little can be accomplished. Teachers appear to need at least one hour together each week to accomplish the basic tasks of teaming, and individual teachers need their own preparation time and space, just as they always have, in order to function effectively in their separate instructional duties.

Team planning space is a significant part of the fully-functioning team. When possible, a planning room for each team is best. In older buildings, extra classrooms, if they exist, can be transformed into comfortable, if not elegant, team planning rooms. A message board can be very helpful to intra-team communication. A coffee pot and snack area also help the team members enjoy their time together. These efforts, and others, are well worth the energy they require.

There are, obviously, many nonpersonal aspects of effective team operations, but it's the human factor that is really at the heart of effective teaming. Successful team members say that, in some ways, teaming is like a marriage. It requires truly skillful interpersonal communication. It requires a willingness to think like a member of a group and not simply on the basis of what is best for one person. It requires a number of important cooperative attitudes, all of which are aimed at permitting different people with different strengths, weaknesses, and preferences to work together happily. Probably no more important attitude exists, however, than the personal commitment to teaming; investing oneself in a group of professionals rather than demanding total individual independence is the key.

Since career teachers must spend years together, harmony is an important factor in productivity. A number of factors contribute to this team harmony: avoiding criticism of one's teammates; giving compliments to those same persons; helping each other freely and regularly; and, valuing confidentiality.

Another important part of team harmony, just like the harmony in a good marriage, is the recognition and tolerance of differences in personalities of the members. Some of us turn outward, looking for action, involvement, and group sociability. Others turn inward, preferring more private time and opportunities for thoughtful reflection. Some team members prefer the world of facts and reality and like things to stay the way they are. Others are full of new ideas and like to focus on the future, preferring change to stability. Many of us make decisions with our hearts and have our feelings hurt easily. Some of us like to be objective and logical, and don't really think a lot about the feelings of others or even our own. A preference for living a very well planned, orderly structured life is high on many educators' priorities. Others enjoy the blessings of flexibility, spontaneity and adaptability. All of these attitudes are essential to a fully-functioning team, so tolerance of the differences of others is absolutely essential to the success of the team effort. No one set of attitudes or preferences is best.

Effective team meetings are also crucial to the success of team efforts. Time wasted or misused defeats the team. Experienced team leaders suggest that punctualiity, well-organized agendas, and the duplication and distribution of the minutes of team meetings are crucial. Team leaders also cite working for consensus and sticking with the final decision as factors in the successful implementation of the outcomes of team meetings.

Effective team leadership is, itself, one of the most essential ingredients to effective team operation. Good team leaders may be the most important factor in team functioning. Successful team leaders play a multitude of roles and pursue a number of concerns in the line of duty. They are the chief parent contact, the team's morale booster, a model of effective professional practice, and a focal point in the development and implementation of school policy.

Team leaders are responsible, frequently, for conducting team meetings, for working on the team budget and schedule, and for acting as an important liaison between the team, special school committees, other teams, and the school administration. Good team leaders work hard to help the team develop and pursue a common instructional purpose. Team members who share the same goals are more likely to reach them. Team leaders also shoulder the burden of helping the team evaluate itself on a regular basis.

Team leaders, then, can be counted on to represent their team in all aspects of school affairs outside the team, and they coordinate the educational program of their own team. They are very important people. Of course, the school administrators are a factor in team effectiveness, too. School principals who grant a measure of autonomy to their teams will discover teams that can be trusted.

Finally, students cannot be forgotten in any accounting of the requirements for successful teaming. Students must feel a part of the team, they must be personally involved, and there are a number of guaranteed methods for stimulating student involvement: naming the team, having a team motto, team colors, decorating the team area, planning regular team events. Student involvement in the team varies in direct proportion to the willingness of the faculty to engage in these types of team building activities. Although many who have been prepared for teaching in secondary schools have not always believed that developing student team spirit was really the faculty responsibility, the practical positive results of doing so ought to make even the most traditional teacher take a second look at the importance of student involvement.

When the requirements for success have been met, teachers on teams can fully expect that certain practical benefits will result from their efforts. Teachers will discover, for example, that together they know students much more comprehensively than ever before, and that this knowledge helps them accomplish a number of tasks with greater ease and effectiveness. Teachers discover the students want to be known by teachers in a more personal way. Teacher-to-teacher relationships often improve dramatically. Teaming teachers learn from experience that collaboration pays big dividends: new ideas for old problems will be more common. Assisting each other in professional tasks leads to improved relationships with colleagues. In times past, often the only occasions for developing friendships and working relationships with colleagues was in the teachers' lounge. Teams make it better. As teaching becomes an increasingly difficult task, it's good to know that one is not alone.

As indicated earlier, teaming does make discipline and classroom management significantly easier. Common rules and common expectations convince students much more readily. Many difficult school situations become more easily handled when a team effort is applied. Many teachers report that even professional time can be managed more efficiently with the assistance of their teammates. Special activities like field trips and parties go more smoothly, with less effort from individual teachers.

Advantages for teachers lead naturally to advantages for students. There is no question that the team organization assists students in moving from the largely self-contained atmosphere of the elementary school to the more highly departmentalized situation of the average high school. Feeling like a special part of a special group becomes much more likely with the team organization.

On a day to day basis, students are more likely to receive a program that is adjusted to their maturity level. In fact, students are much more likely to receive a totally balanced program with teaming than they might receive in either the self-contained classroom or the subject department.

Having a group of teachers who work together makes it possible for students to communicate clearly with all of them, even if they talk most comfortably with one. Students really do appreciate the consistency that comes with teachers working together, even if the students never admit it.

Older children and early adolescents need the structure and support that teacher teamwork offers. In today's society such structure and support must come from the school, since it is all too often absent elsewhere. It is important that we do not turn the task of raising our children over to other children. Adult models of cooperation, warmth, tolerance, and peaceful problem-solving are essential.

The interdisciplinary organization of teachers into teams will not solve all the problems of our professional world, and success does not come without effort, but research and recent experience suggest that teaming is worth the effort. The interdisciplinary team organization is far more complex and considerably more variable than educators once believed. Fortunately, it also appears to be a more effective and a somewhat hardier variety of educational innovation than might have been expected. The numbers of schools organized into interdisciplinary teams has probably now moved beyond the 5,000 mark, spurred on by increasing numbers of junior high schools that are changing from department to team as the way in which teachers and students are organized for instruction.

ADVISORY GROUPS AND ALTERNATIVES TO CHRONOLOGICAL AGE GROUPING: HOW DO THEY HELP THE TEAM?

If one accepts the assumption outlined earlier in this chapter, that effective middle schools must promote the accomplishment of two equally important psycho-social goals (individual uniqueness and solidarity with the ideals of our society), then program components like the advisory group and multiage grouping take on increased significance. While such program components do play a valuable, perhaps even crucial, role in the area of appreciating and stimulating the individualized focus of the middle school, they are equally central to providing the structure which leads students to accept the responsibilities which effective group membership implies.

With the team organization at the heart of a good middle school program, those additional program components can be seen in a different light, as important reinforcing elements to the team function, instead of devoted solely to the enhancement of the uniqueness of the individual student. Advisory groups offer, in this regard, the smallest formal positive group which the school can provide. In addition to the commonly accepted and well known guidance functions which such groups perform, I believe they also offer a very small but vital subgroup to which almost all students can offer their alligence. Because there are, as many educators forlornly admit, many students who cannot identify with a group as large as a team of 150 students, let alone a school of one thousand, schools must be organized differently. An advisory group of twenty students and one teacher may be small enough to encourage all except the most seriously disturbed or disruptive students to feel involved.

The activities that occur during these advisory group periods must, therefore, be aimed at enhancing a sense of group solidarity as much as they are aimed at facilitating individual uniqueness. Learning to see themselves as a group, accepting the duties and responsibilities of group membership, and consciously building the skills that permit effective group citizenship are crucial to the smooth operation of middle level schools. Such skills and attitudes will lead, I believe, to the assumption of effective American citizenship by the generation of adults who are now the youth in our schools. Advisory groups are the perfect vehicle for accomplishing these important goals. Without these small groups, many of the students will be lost, as successful students today and as effective citizens tomorrow.

Advisory groups can exist without the parallel existence of an interdisciplinary team organization. Under such circumstances, however, advisory programs tend to be much less durable and much more vulnerable to the shifting priorities of school systems and the vagaries of faculty preferences. Teams, themselves, also function less smoothly when there are no small group building blocks to add strength to the total team. Both interdisciplinary teams and advisory groups function better when they function together. Educators who choose to have teams, without advisory groups, make effective team organization more difficult for everyone and success less likely. Advisory groups without teams are almost always short-lived.

The same experience applies to multiage grouping and other alternatives to standard chronological age-grade level grouping. When students and teachers are permitted to spend more than one academic year together, as these alternatives allow, both advisory groups and the team organization function more and more effectively. It is, I believe, a fact of educational life known to far too few, that long term relationships between and among teachers and students in middle level schools enhance almost every important aspect of schooling: academic achievement, relationships with parents, discipline, race relationships, and teacher morale.

When teachers and students are organized into teams which help them to come to know and care about each other, it is only common sense to try to find a way to extend those relationships over a longer period of time. Many outstanding middle schools have done just that; multiage grouping, school-within-school programs, and teacher-student-progression plans which enable teachers to stay with the same team of students for two or three years are becoming more common each year. Originally intended to facilitate the individualization of the curriculum, these alternative grouping patterns are proving to be even more valuable in cementing strong teacher-student relationships and giving them a longer duration. Even more fascinating, such arrangements appear to make bad situations better, instead of perpetuating the less desirable conditions. Almost all teacher-student relationships appear to improve over time, and when this improves, all other aspects of school function more effectively. Educators have, I believe, begun to learn that stability and structure in school life means that overturning the applecart of teacher-student relationships every nine months is no more helpful in school that such disruption to human connections is in any other realm of human life. Schools may be the last institution in modern America to still believe that musical chairs in human relationships is a good thing. I believe that the modern middle school will have been worth all the effort of the last two decades, even if the only thing accomplished is to drive home the understanding of the promise and the power of permanence in human relationships.

Viewing schools as assembly lines, where one teacher works on one part of the product and then passes it along to the next stop on the line, is an idea who's time has come to an end. Schools should not mimic factory life, especially since we have learned how unproductive such factories have become. Above all else, I believe, schools must be organized so that warm personal human communities are the goal as well as the process by which learning is accomplished. Advisory groups and alternatives to chronological age grouping assist teams in arriving at such destinations, schools where quality and caring count.

SUMMARY

Logic, experience and research combine to indicate that middle level schools must be organized in a way that our students succeed in developing a sense of solidarity with the ideals of our society. To do so, middle school experiences must encourage group involvement, school spirit, group pride. The interdisciplinary team organization, with the advisory programs and grouping strategies that support it, is the only viable alternative which will permit us to accomplish these goals. Educators know why teams work, and how they work. The agenda for the remainder of this century, for middle school education, is to make certain that, by 2001 A.D., no youngster reaches high school without having this crucial school experience.

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VII

Mary F. Compton

Balance in the Middle School Curriculum

The curriculum is the single most important feature of a true middle school, so many claim. Certainly it is this component which should most obviously distinguish it from either the elementary school or the senior high school. One might well ask, then, "What curricula should be included in order to assure that the middle school is indeed separate and unique?"

The dilemma of the curriculum worker was brilliantly satirized in *The Saber-Tooth Curriculum* (Peddiwell, 1939). For those readers who have yet to encounter this classic or who have only a foggy recollection of it, a brief review here may be apropos. New-Fist-Hammer Maker was "the first great educational theorist and practitioner" (p. 24). He lived in Chellan times when the saber-tooth tiger and wooly miniature horses roamed the land and fish was the dietary staple. It was New-Fist who proposed that the first school adopt as prescribed curricula the essential courses [illegible] "fish-grabbing-with-the-bare-hand," "wooly-horse-clubbing," and "saber-tooth-tiger-scaring." These were the skills necessary for survival at that particular time so the school became quite successful in preparing youngsters for tribal life during this paleolithic period. When the ice age came, the wooly horses and saber-tooth tigers became extinct. The fish became wary of the hands that plunged into the stream to grab them, and new means had to be devised to catch them. New-Fist, great curriculum planner that he was, suggested that the total curriculum needed careful evaluation and revision. He encountered many critics. Some argued that they had been taught wooly-horse-clubbing, saber-tooth-tiger-scaring, and fish-grabbing when they went to school. If that curriculum was good enough for them, it was good enough for their children. Others said that adding proposed new subjects (fads and frills) would make the curriculum overcrowded. Still others stated that the three basic subjects developed intelligence and basic skills and that was the purpose of education. They argued that "...the essence of true education is timeless...there are some eternal verities, and the saber-tooth curriculum is one of them" (p. 44).

One might ponder how far we in the late twentieth century have progressed from this fictional account of a "saber-tooth curriculum." How much of what we know about early adolescents have we incorporated into the middle school curriculum, and how much of it is residue from an earlier time when grades six, seven, and eight were part of either elementary or secondary programs? Have we accepted some pieces of content as "eternal verities" just because they seemed appropriate for an earlier time or for another age group?

WHAT IS BALANCE?

When one hears the term "balance," one of the following may come to mind: a seesaw with a fulcrum, scales with weights of equal proportion in each of the pans, or a tightrope walker carefully progressing on a taut wire suspended several feet in the air. It may remind others, however, of a major symphony orchestra playing with such superb balance that neither strings, percussion, brass, nor wind instruments dominate.

I remember as an early adolescent watching my grandmother carefully preparing iced tea for the family dinner on a sweltering July afternoon. "Why do you go to such trouble to boil water to make the tea hot," I asked, "and then you add ice to it to make it cold?" She seemed not to hear me, so I continued as she immersed the tea bags into the water. "Then you pour it into glasses, and the family adds sugar to it to make it sweet and lemon to make it sour. It just doesn't make sense."

Without turning from her work she replied, "It tastes pretty good, doesn't it? You usually drink at least two glasses. It tastes good, honey, because the temperature and the taste are balanced. If one part of the process was left out or done improperly, it just wouldn't taste the same."

In education, we seldom view balance in terms of a seesaw, a tightrope walker, a symphony orchestra, or iced tea — though I think there may be a moral in the iced tea story. We are usually concerned with balance in terms of organization, staff, teaching methods, and most particularly, time allocated to certain areas. We tend to place value labels on certain curricular areas and call them "academics" or "basics." Others are assigned lower-status names such as "elective" or "extra-curricular." We affirm orally, of course, that all are important. In times of financial stress, however, the latter group is usually the first axed in order to restore fiscal balance to the system. In this day of emphasis on the "basic skills," the same group is often cut or eliminated in an attempt to devote increased time and effort to reading or mathematics. Even in the best of educational times, the academic areas have gotten the lion's share of the school day.

Educators often espouse certain teaching methods, but seldom is there a hue and cry for balance in methods. If the most popular method is utilized by most of the staff, concern for methodological balance is non-existent. Only certain content areas are considered sufficiently unique to employ a different repertoire of strategies — physical education, music, and art, for example. Some teachers refuse to change because the methods with which they feel comfortable *seem* to be highly successful for them.

The staff assigned to a school is ordinarily determined by the number of teachers earned on the basis of student enrollment. Further decisions are made by projected enrollments in specific courses. This number is further determined by the student-teacher ratio prescribed for the type of class organization employed in different content areas. Often balance is also sought in terms of sex, age, and experience.

Balance in evaluation often means teacher-made tests once a week or so and standardized tests on a system-wide basis each year or at least every two years. The results of these commercial tests are often the only evidence offered of the success or failure of the school program. A notable exception may be periodic accreditation by state and/or regional associations. Such external evaluations seldom result in significant improvement in schools at any level unless the staff of the individual school is convinced that change is needed.

WHAT ASPECTS NEED TO BE BALANCED?

Preparation for Society

The Committee on Reorganization of Secondary Education (1918) in its "cardinal principles of education" listed as one of the seven objectives, "citizenship." With such a broad category one cannot be certain of the exact meaning. In America in this closing portion of the twentieth century it may mean something quite different from the meaning intended in the opening years of this century.

One might argue that all education is preparation for citizenship, not merely high school offerings in civics or economics. An American citizen today must understand consumer economics, health, and the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. He/she must have some understanding of our political system and the rights of its citizens. There are those among us who would argue that basic computer skills are essential, as well. An executive of Bell South was asked recently in a meeting with high school principals to enumerate the entry skills required by the telephone company for high school graduates seeking employment. He replied that Bell South wanted young people who could read, who could think clearly, who had basic computer skills, and who were willing to learn. The company, he said, would prepare young people for specific positions. It is impossible today to predict the specific skills which will be required of those who will earn their livelihoods in the twenty-first century. One skill that educators and many others would add to the list prescribed by the telephone company executive would be skill in human relations. Even a computer programmer or a lineman cannot work or live in total isolation. The importance of effective human relations has been documented many times and is more important than ever in our world neighborhood.

The Needs of Early Adolescents

Middle schools are unique in that they are specifically designed to provide educational opportunities for early adolescents. People who work or live with this age group agree that these youngsters are quite different from younger children in the primary grades and from older adolescents in the high school. Their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development is sporatic and often rapid. Because they are changing so rapidly there should be provisions within the school to help them learn while they are coping with internal change. This calls for a frequent change of pace during the day, provision of breakfast or snack programs, a variety of furniture which may be adjusted to provide for changing bodies, opportunities to choose learning activities, and opportunities to explore values. Middle school students need to be able to try out new ideas and to fail, if need be, without fear. Eichhorn's (1966) term, "transescent," was meant not only to provide a label for this group of youngsters from ten to fourteen years of age, but to emphasize the many changes through which these youngsters are going in order to become adolescents and, finally, fully-functioning adults. The term itself indicates a need for a program based on the needs of the early adolescent. These needs cannot be fully met if any one of the objective domains—cognitive, affective, or psychomotor (Bloom, 1956; Krathwohl, 1964)—receive over-emphasis to the detriment of the other two. At no other age level is this generalization quite so correct.

Content

Content is, of course, a major consideration in achieving a balanced middle school curriculum. The mastery of content at the middle level is not as dependent as commonly viewed, however, on a progression through a series of neatly packaged courses bearing labels such as "science," "language arts," "mathematics," or "social studies." Nor is it confined to boxes marked "music," "art," or "industrial arts." If we as middle school educators accept the premise that a middle school is an institution based on the needs of transescents, the curriculum should reflect our knowledge of the student.

We know, for example, that abilities within a middle school will range at least eight to ten years. Within this range there are a variety of types of abilities — cognitive, affective, and physochomotor. The youngster who excells in mathematics is not necessarily the youngster who can run the 100-yard dash in nine seconds — although he very well could be.

Developmental psychologists tell us that most middle school students are not sufficiently intellectually mature to put together the separate pieces of the curriculum in order to see how they form an integrated whole that can be applied to lifetime situations. Knowledge doesn't exist in separate compartments. Youngsters and their adult counterparts live in a world in which music, science, art, and literature are integral parts of their lives. We humans enjoy the impact of these so-called content fields without attending to separate subject categories. The transescent, for example, may watch a National Geographic program on television that features an adventure of the great oceanographic explorer, Jacques Cousteau. He/she probably won't categorize the portions of the program into science (the living world of the sea), social science (the route of the craft Calypso), physical education (the movements of the divers), art (the beautiful photographic essays which are the fabric of the program), the music (which enhances the action), or the literary grace of the words of Loren Eiseley describing the power and beauty of the sea as these are woven into the narration of the program. None of us who are fortunate enough to view such a program will think to ourselves, "this is science, or that is art." Yet, most of us have been taught in school through a segmented curriculum and may have been persuaded to believe that everything in life must be classified into certain slots.

If, then, the middle school is to meet the needs of the learner and that of the person he/she will be for many years to come, we must do away with the segmenting of the curriculum into content areas — or worse, into "disciplines" — and provide an integrated program which will help youngsters to become aware of the seamless web of knowledge and skills. As with my grandmother's tea, balance is achieved only in the melding.

Learning Opportunities for All

The middle school often represents the last time youngsters of a particular age group will be together in an instructional setting. Students with average or above average intellectual ability may continue together through high school and into post-secondary education. Lower ability groups will experience increased segregation from the mainstream through the high school and beyond. Those who are different from the rest because of physical, emotional, or intellectual handicaps will be in the secondary mainstream only if they are fortunate enough to work with enlightened educators or have an enormous amount of personal tenacity. Middle schools are likely to be the last time schools can exercise a profound impact on the self concept of the learner (Gordon, 1975). For many students, the middle school represents a source of strength during a period of great emotional vulnerability, a time during which "who I think I am" is not necessarily in line with "who I am," but it is much more important than reality.

Middle schoolers should have an opportunity to make some choices in their curriculum. They should be provided with a choice of activities which will satisfy particular personal goals. If the objective of a language unit, for example, is for the student to demonstrate the ability to write a paragraph containing at least one of each of the following — a simple sentence, a compound sentence, and a complex sentence — why shouldn't he/she be allowed to select a topic of interest? What does it matter if one student writes about an event during a baseball game and another writes about a new car purchased by his/her parents? Even if the topic is limited, there should be many different ways of satisfying the objective.

All transescents have many characteristics in common, and schools should capitalize on the commonalities rather than on the differences. In curricular areas in which youngsters can work together regardless of abilities they should be heterogeneously grouped. In those segments in which specific skills are required, homogeneous grouping may be advantageous. However, upon what criterion should homogeneous grouping be based? IQ, test scores, reading ability, and general achievement have all been the bases for grouping. Usually teachers find they need to regroup even within a so-called homogeneous group. Advocates of interdisciplinary teaming (Alexander & George, 1981) suggest that constant regrouping is facilitated by assigning a large group of youngsters to a team of teachers. Once teachers are locked into a separate subject schedule through which students move every 45 to 50 minutes, flexibility is nearly impossible. But transescents come in all sizes, shapes, and emotional makeup. They all strive for acceptance, so the school should actively identify and provide opportunities for success for all students. There should be times during which students are together because they have developed the same level of ability in a specific task. There should be other times when students are grouped because they have similar interests regardless of ability. There are still other times when students are grouped simply because they want to work together.

ACHIEVING BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

There is no magic wand that can be passed over a school to render balance in its curriculum. Achieving balance requires tireless effort by a cohesive school staff. George (1983) describes a "Theory Z" school which takes into account the needs of youngsters, the needs of society, and the available knowledge. He suggests that there be a written document describing the goals of the school and an explicit matching of curricular offerings with these goals. He also suggests that many groups should participate in the development of the curriculum — educators, parents, students, and the general public. Cohesiveness is built, George argues, on participation. The resulting unity carries over from the staff to the students, and to other parts of the community.

A colleague of mine suggested to one school district that the central office staff request from each of the schools a listing of general curriculum topics with a listing of units under each topic at each grade level. These were written on a huge chart and hung in the conference room of the administration offices. Several times a day central office staff members would come into the conference room and stare at the chart which showed all curricular offerings in the district. Soon individuals began to comment on the amount of overlap between and within grade levels. Some who had spent many hours in the exercise began to see that there was a tremendous imbalance among curricular components. Finally, some astute members of the staff began to note that there was too much emphasis on learning facts rather than understanding concepts and being able to explore ways of putting what had been learned into practice. This may appear to be a long, drawn-out process as a means of achieving balance. However, a need to achieve balance was identified, expressed, and acted upon. Balance was soon brought about in the curriculum of that district.

Another means might be a chart for one particular school — since so much of what must be accomplished is centered at that level. One might envision a chart showing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor needs of students. Curricular areas could then be listed on the chart to indicate as many of the three domains as could be enhanced through specific topics across curricular components. How does a unit on the Revolutionary War help a transescent understand what is happening in twentieth century America? How does a unit on the solar system help youngsters understand the intricacies of living in peace on our own planet?

Central to any type of curriculum reform is a unified faculty. The staff of the individual school is perhaps the most appropriate force for bringing about balance in the total curriculum. It is this group which must identify a need if there is to be change. Participatory planning is imperative. The ownership thus gained in the curriculum plan insures implementation. If the plan is imposed from above, the faculty may take it or, more likely, they will leave it outside their closed doors.

AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

In curriculum, as well as in other aspects of life, "separate" rarely means "equal." The personal development or exploratory area (which usually includes music, health, art, industrial arts, home living, and physical education) has been proposed as a basic part of the middle school curriculum (Lounsbury & Vars, 1978; Alexander & George, 1981). However, in practice this component which is equivalent to that of the "academic areas" is seldom given an equivalent block of time during the school day. None of the major authors of middle school curricula has proposed true integration of the academic and non-academic areas.

Most of the plans suggested by middle school proponents include three segments. An alternative plan might divide the curriculum into three components, but use a different logic for grouping the content areas. Why not place together in a cluster those curricular areas which seem logically to fit together? One part, "humanities," might include language, music, art, and social science. A second part, "technology," might include science, industrial art, mathematics, and home living. A third cluster of equal importance (and due equal time allocation) might include the exploratory areas typically found in activities programs, mini-courses, club activities, and the areas of health, physical education, and leisure. A label for this third grouping might be "personal studies."

A thematic approach could be utilized by interdisciplinary teams. Team members might refer to a grid to facilitate the establishment of scope and sequence for the program while avoiding repetition and unnecessary overlap. By listing major topics on the vertical axis, each team could identify the contribution his/her area of specialization could make to each of the interdisciplinary units. A grid for the "humanities" component is presented in Figure 1. The list of topics in the example are meant to be broad in nature and to represent three years of the middle school.

A similar grid for the "technology" component is presented in Figure 2. As with the grid for "humanities," team members should be aware of the fact that not all content areas will fit equally with each topic. In fact, some content may not be appropriate for certain general topics. The team member whose specialization may not be appropriately integrated during a specific unit should select his/her own topics to be taught independently.

The nature of "personal studies" may require a somewhat different organization. Topics in health might focus on the nature of the transecent through units on the systems of the human body, characteristics and treatment of communicable diseases, barriers to health (substance abuse, emotional disorders, etc.), and first aid. Physical education might be organized into units including activities requiring similar skills, but with an emphasis on lifetime and leisure sports. Examples might include racquet sports, pro-

Figure 1
A Humanities Grid for Curriculum Planning

Topic	Art	Language	Music	Social Science
Who am I?				
How man has lived in groups				
How man has developed belief systems				
How man has developed governmental systems				
How man has communicated				
How man has developed transportation				
How man has utilized industrialization				
How man has developed technology				
International Relationships				

Figure 2
A Technology Grid for Curriculum Planning

Topic	Industrial Arts	Home Living	Mathematics	Science
Measurement				
Natural Resources — U.S.				
Natural Resources — World				
Plant Life — Regional				
Plant Life — U.S.				
Animal Life — Regional				
Animal Life — U.S.				
Ecology				
Genetics				

pulsion sports (emphasizing swimming and jogging), kicking sports (soccer, rugby), throwing sports (basketball, volleyball), and gymnastics. Mini-courses might represent a broad spectrum of interests such as photography, hiking, babysitting, decorative stitchery, cartooning, bridge, broadcast journalism, theater arts, backgammon, landscaping, and others. Many topics could be extensions of those studied in the curricular areas of "humanities" and "technology."

Each of the three curricular components would be planned to occupy an equal portion of the school day. If each of the three segments were assigned to a large block of time in the schedule, team members could cooperatively determine how their broad segment of time would be utilized. On some days an entire block of time might focus on a single activity; at other times, each area of specialization might utilize equal portions of the schedule.

There might be opportunities for teams to work across curricular components. For example, a unit on natural resources of the United States might well relate to the areas of industrial arts, social science, home living, language, and science. This type of curricular cross-over should be encouraged whenever possible to further integrate the content fields and to demonstrate to middle school students the interrelatedness of learning.

This curricular model focuses on what is presently known about the transescent and various means of integrating the program of the school. It is designed to eliminate the schism between "academic" and "other" subjects. It requires no personnel other than those who would ordinarily make up the staff of the middle school. It requires no additional furnishings, materials, or equipment beyond that which would usually be found in schools with more traditional programs. It *does* require a willingness to try a new approach to curriculum planning and, perhaps more importantly, it is based on a trust in teachers to plan the specifics of the school program.

The plan is designed to bring balance to the middle school curriculum. It eliminates the "star system" of academic versus "non-academic" content fields. It is built on the needs of middle school students and it provides for the integration of content areas which logically fit together.

Planning an effective curriculum is time-consuming. Planning a balanced and effective middle school curriculum that reflects the educator's knowledge about transescents and the society in which they may live may literally take years. The task is one that can never be completed because of the nature of our ever changing world. As an ancient Chinese proverb reminds us, the longest journey begins with just one step. It is time for that step to be taken.

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VIII

Alfred A. Arth

Selecting Appropriate Instructional Strategies

The middle school educator is bound by the framework of the unique needs of transescent students. Within those boundaries lay the personal and academic elements which separate middle school educators from those who operate at the elementary or secondary level.

The selection of the most appropriate instructional strategy to fit a given classroom situation is the most important factor in determining the success of the learning day. Five variables in the instructional process need to be considered in order to ensure excellent teacher-student communication and ensure adequate student time on task.

These variable are:

1. the time factor;
2. the social factor;
3. the mental process factor;
4. the learning modality factor, and
5. the challenge factor.

Knowledge of the various elements in these factors and how they can be manipulated through their selective use and combinations with the 10-14 year old student is what makes middle school education so powerful and so unique within the continuum of public education.

The secret of success for middle schools lies in the teacher's ability to be able to rapidly decode, under adverse conditions, "the range of the strange" that they face every day and make the needed instructional adjustments. This appears to be too simple an answer for such a complex, skilled reaction by the professional middle school educator, but this ability is the fine line between "good" and "excellent" instruction.

An examination of how the five factors influence the selection of appropriate teaching strategies will be presented in this chapter. The client, the student, is truly the key element. Middle school students on their best day are "squirrely" and the people who teach them must understand and empathize with them. As the old adage goes, it "takes one to know one," for the best middle school educators appear to be squirrely themselves. They hop rapidly from one event to another, peering intently to the left and then to the right and even hop backwards if need be. With seemingly boundless energy, they dash off to some area in their territory where the elements for a potential disruption exist. They are fast, in constant motion, and appear to have unlimited energy. It takes a special person to have the endurance, physical stamina, and rapid problem solving ability to last all day at that hectic pace. The successful middle school educator has that special ability.

The rapid pace which the teacher of the transescent student maintains needs to be analyzed and understood. This same pace is not found in elementary or secondary classrooms; the clienteles there do not demand it. Current studies are documenting the extra energy level ability needed by middle level teachers.

Manipulating the Time Factor

There seems to be a preferred usage of the time and energy of the teacher and student operating within the middle level curriculum. The *manipulation of the time factor* is critical to the selection of accurate instructional strategies.

A desirable middle school period is forty-four (44) minutes in length with a day of eight periods, six for teaching and two for planning and internal curriculum support activities. The exact manner in which these time periods are used can only be decided by the classroom educator.

One effective way to employ these time periods is through the use of the "quarter system." The forty-four minute period is broken into four eleven-minute components. In the first eleven minutes the teacher lectures to the students about the major concepts or the cognition that is to be considered. This lecture or direct instruction ought to enlist all the supporting aspects of good teaching such as emotion, academic debate, unanswered rhetorical questions, inquiry, humane opinion, finesse of experience, and the right balance between challenge and security — the kind of presentation that a computer cannot make.

The next eleven minutes (one quarter of the time) would be a period in which the students actively question the teacher in relation to the teacher's presentation. Rote recall questions should be used along with comparison, cause and effect, supposition and inference questions during the students' question time period.

The succeeding eleven minutes should be spent by the students in working with other students on a teacher determined or teacher-student determined outline for investigation of the concept under discussion. No "deliberate off task" activity is tolerated here or in any of the other quarters of the instructional period.

Finally, eleven minutes should be spent in alone time. The student should be alone with thoughts, ideas, and questions during this golden time. Teacher-student interaction time in the middle school classroom appears to average out to 120 interactions within sixty minutes - a clock hour. This is a rapid and tiring amount of human interaction. The human interaction that is the basis for the instructional strategy is one of the keys to learning, but it is exhausting. Alone time allows for reorganization and the quiet regrouping of thoughts. The rapid pace of middle school demands that this element be present.

When the use of classroom time is varied to allow for interaction and discussion of information and that time is jointly planned for by student and teacher, responsibility for learning is increased on the part of the student. Time is the school's most important element of instruction. Students must learn how to use it.

Time is one of the few factors that is essentially equal in all schools; big schools, small schools, rich schools, poor schools, country schools and city schools all have approximately the same amount of time to manipulate. The wise use of that time is likely to be the difference between an average school program and a superior program.

The "quarter system" is a fine tool in the hands of the professional craftsman who interacts every day with the students entrusted to him/her by a school system and parents who expect to receive the best possible education for their most cherished possession.

Manipulating the Social Factor

The *manipulation of the social factor* allows the personality of the true middle school educator to evolve forcefully. Teachers can be trained to efficiently teach in middle schools, but it takes something more for a teacher to be not just efficient but to be an effective and influential classroom educator. The *gimmick* is part of the social factor savvy of the true middle school educator. A gimmick is a "decisive or strategic element or feature that is purposely hidden - unobtrusive." For example, take this situation as observed by this author: *Teacher,* "I want the class to do fifty-five math problems tonight." *Class,* "Oh, no, - no, not fifty-five problems. Oh, we can't - that's too many . . . Oh, good grief." *Teacher,* "Oh, then just do twelve." *Class,* "Yea! Yea!" The teacher only wanted twelve problems completed that night. The gimmick was used to encourge personal and social involvement in the homework assignment and to cause the student to believe that they were beginning to influence authority.

The following situation is another example. *Teacher,* "There seems to be some problem with the accuracy of the area and perimeter homework problems that have been turned in. The class is working at only a forty percent level of success. Does any one have a possible reason for this?" The class is absolutely silent. *Teacher,* "I'll put on the bulletin board any student-written reasons why this school should be under water if that student gets a seventy-five percent or better on tonight's area and perimeter homework." The possibilities are extremely good that everybody would score above the seventy-five percent level and that most of the reasons for the underwater school would be well thought-out. The school, of course, remained above water. The middle school educator can stimulate by deliberately and calculatingly manipulating the ordinary into the unexpected and the exciting. This is a gimmick at its best.

Secondary teachers who hear of this teaching tool being used by a middle school teacher may react negatively. They will point out that the student is just being tricked by the teacher and that eventually the student will realize that this is just that, a trick. This is very possible, but when the student reasons out the situation, he/she will usually be in high school.

The *Outlandish Statement* is another element in the social factor played well by the true middle school teacher. The following example of this technique was observed by this author while roaming about a middle school in the midwest.

A slight disruption occurred in the left rear of the room. *Teacher,* "If you two do not become absolutely silent for the next 18 hours, I will pull off your legs, stuff them in your ears, haul you down the hallway out the door, and let you sit in the snow for one millenium." *Students,* "OK, we'll be quiet." The point was overly made by a teacher who cared and was received by students who knew they were out of order, but still belonged to the teacher and the class as respected members of that special group. Being recognized in such a non-threatening, somewhat humorous manner does not usually make a student subject to peer harassment.

The middle school teacher who quotes supposedly available research can stimulate some interesting, short-termed on-task energy. The following outlandish statement might be effective with a class that has been studying Roman numerals for three weeks: *Teacher,* "You know, class, I'm not sure, but believe that I read somewhere in a dark corner of the library that students who get high scores on tests about Roman numerals can glow in the dark. As soon as we finish this test, I am going to turn off the lights; do your best."

Manipulating the Mental Factor

The manipulation of the mental factor is slightly different. This is the teacher's chess game. It is a reaction to the reactions that occur after the careful introductory explanation of a concept has been fully presented. There are at least five major mental processes that students can go through during an active class period; 1) rote recall, 2) awareness, 3) decision making, 4) convergent thinking, and 5) divergent thinking.

The *rote recall* mental process is very valuable because it allows for the retrieval of information that has been filed in the mind. These isolated or linked factors can be used to develop new ideas or can be used to solve certain types of problems. Rote recall is one-fifth of the plausible types of mental activity that support the middle school learning day. The accurate middle school teacher uses this rote recall process about 20-30% of the time and intersperses the other four when needed.

Awareness, the mental ability to be cognizant of the position or the relationship of things, allows the student to place things and events in perspective. One of our middle school concerns is that the learning of social awareness may be occupying a majority of the active mind of our students when we are trying to get a group of socially maturing people to concentrate on decimals and their pragmatic usage. The skill of using awareness to gain social perspective can be transferred to the academic area by the student if the teacher shows the correlation.

The manipulation of students around their strong desire to be contributing peers first and successful students second, is a heavy challenge to the middle school educator. A recent survey conducted by the Area of Middle School, University of Wyoming, indicated the weight of this challenge; when asked the question: "If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?" (a) to have a better looking body, (b) be smarter, (c) have the teacher compliment you, (d) have less homework, (e) be more athletic", the majority of 5th graders interviewed answered, "to be smarter" with no votes for "better looking body." The majority of 7th graders, however, voted heavily "for a better looking body" with only a very few voting, "to be smarter." The excellent middle school teacher knows this intuitively. This study just reinforced these feelings about the heavy social pressure that mounts during the transescent years.

Academics are not dismissed by the students as being of little value during these school years, but they are necessarily placed in a secondary position. Survival in the newly recognized social circuit becomes a major concern for most transescents. If the "right" actions are not learned rapidly, the "failure" can be very hurtful.

On the same questionnaire an additional question asked, "If you could change one of the following parts of your body, which would you change?

(a) mouth, (b) feet, (c) nose, (d) ears, (e) hair." Fifth graders chose hair 33% of the time while seventh graders chose hair 71% of the time. Hair combing by seventh graders might well be expected during a discussion of the Panama Canal, and the true middle school teacher intuitively knows that. Such hair combing has to be tolerated to the degree of each teacher's toleration threshold, but whether permitted or not, it must be totally understood as one of the unique needs of transescent students.

The social factor needs to be amalgamated with the instructional process so that the humane and academic aspects of an education can *both* be developed during a balanced school day. The wise selection of responses and reactions to the socialization efforts of transescents separates the effective middle school teacher from others.

A reminder to the teacher, that the individual student decides to learn reinforces the need for time for positive decision making on-task as a major portion of any daily lesson. Convergent and divergent thinking are certainly the prevailing mental factors used during the majority of lessons which utilize the elements of problem solving. To have the transescent student learn how to learn and that they can learn is the only absolute responsibility of the middle school educator. All other teacher actions support this factor.

Manipulating the Learning Modality Factor

The manipulation of the learning modality factor is best accomplished when the transescent student's assistance has been acquired. This involvement will cause an increase in the student's sense of academic responsibility. As students are reminded that they apparently learn in five different ways; by (1) listening, (2) reading, (3) talking to one another, (4) thinking alone, and (5) hands-on activity, they can seek their best method of learning in relation to the teacher controlled choice task they are to enter into.

Controlled choice is the name given to the concerned middle school teacher's ability to list the segments of the concept to be learned and the teacher approved methods for achieving closure under acceptable school goals. There are many very expensive "programs" available for purchase by school systems that will support a course of learning. Once purchased, these "plans" will instruct teachers to notify students of expected outcomes; establish a reward system and jointly review the final student project. Do true middle school teachers need such a program? Maybe what they need instead is a share of the cost of the program for more classroom materials to assist with the completion of their explained-assisted-initiated lessons, completed years before "the program" was on the market.

Manipulating the Challenge Factor

The manipulation of the challenge factor; middle level teachers believe that they are challenged more than elementary or secondary teachers as they conduct their classroom interactions. They appear to be accurate in that assumption. Only that person who believes that they are in charge and that they belong in front of the classroom will remain in front of the classroom throughout the presentation and activities. Middle level teachers believe that they must teach and discipline at the same time. Neither elementary nor secondary teachers appear to believe that factor to the same degree as do middle level teachers.

A study presently underway, aimed at obtaining a profile of the traits of middle school teachers, has already provided some interesting data. With seven hundred and ninety five (795) of the one thousand (1000) subjects being sought, from nineteen (19) different cooperating school systems across the country, the beginning of an intriguing profile is emerging. Aside from the demographic data which is painting an interesting profile of the average middle school teacher, the predictable traits are emerging. In response to the question: "Is it normal for students of this age to challenge authority?", 24.8% strongly agree, 61.9% agree, providing a total of 86.7% of the population strongly agreeing or agreeing that they perceive that these students do challenge authority.

Classroom observations across the country in schools serving the 10-14 year old bear out this factor of middle level teaching. Although challenged for the authority of the classroom and challenged for the right to conduct the class, the middle school educator still maintained an effective classroom control. Very few elementary or secondary teachers perceive that they experience this factor of challenge of authority. Interestingly enough, only true middle school teachers believe this is "normal"!

The challenge factor by students with developing personalities in the "second chance area" is understood by the true middle school educator, and that educator teaches successfully within the factor. These same teachers must also realize that this is a special strength of the middle level classroom educator.

The manipulation and usage of the challenge factor allows for the middle school faculty member to meet needs of the challenge-experimental-questioning mind of the transescent student. This is another example of the combination of a felt need with a superior instructional strategy.

Selecting appropriate instruction strategies for the education of the transescent student is a mammoth job. It can only be accomplished by special educators, ones who truly enjoy working with this age student, who are sensitive, flexible, and thus are effective with this age student.

The selection of the appropriate instructional strategy is a complex matter. Adherence to the five major factors of the instructional process provides the initial direction towards success, but the key ingredient is the person of the middle school educator. The actual middle school curriculum hinges on the middle school teacher teaching with a finesse that allows for the needed constant eye scan of the room to make sure that the back left corner is still on this planet while apparently rewarding the right front of the classroom for their underlying support of the teacher directed activities.

The professional middle school educator can be educated within an undergraduate teacher education program that includes the appropriate content and methods courses. Excellent middle school classroom educators can determine when they should reprimand, review, start group work, allow alone time, and when to "gimmick" an assignment. But it is only the true middle school educator that can combine the cognitions presented previously with that feeling of "right" when selecting when and where they are to use time, social factors, varied mental processes, different learning modalities, and the challenge of a human learner engaged in the lonely business of learning.

Once when asked "What is the key to excellent teaching", this author replied, "The ability to communicate with your students." Who then teaches the wild, emotional, up-down, constantly changing and inquiring student? Who? The who and the how are synonomous in the profile of the true middle school educator.

The principles of learning generally are applicable across the grades. Good teaching in the primary grades follows most of the same principles as does good teaching in the high school. Yet, there is considerable validity to the position that appropriate instructional strategies for middle school students are quite distinctive. Teaching techniques for transescents are often inappropriate at other levels, and vice versa. In the past two decades a number of conclusions regarding instructional techniques for 10-14 year olds have emerged and provide guidance for teachers.

IX

Nancy Doda

The Generics of Middle School Teaching

In the last two decades, thousands of educators nationwide have engaged in an educational campaign dedicated to improving schools for young teens. Reminiscent of education's humanistic days, these educators have struggled to design programs of learning which truly reflect the special needs of emerging adolescents. Their record of success has been remarkable. Many schools have personalized school life with alternatives to the traditional department structure. Others have attended to the affective and personal needs of young teens with programs of teacher-student guidance. Still others have broadened student opportunities for recognition, participation, and exploration. All of these means have yielded more developmentally responsive schools.

While responsive middle schools have in fact provided environments in which teaching can be more rewarding and effective, the mysteries of teaching transescents have yet to be solved. Teachers' voices still carry tones of exasperation, frustration and query, unique to the experience of those who work with young teens. Should we be surprised? The work of teaching young teens still awaits wisdom.

Where is the wisdom to be found? Some is found in strategies that yield results. Some is found in research. Some is found in the schools in which we work. And, some is found in the caverns of our hearts and minds, in the quality of thought and reflection we bring to the work we do. Some, I hope, will be found here in the pages you are about to read.

The Psychic Edge

I met an elderly man on a plane trip who appeared to be the original white-knuckled flyer. We struck up a conversation, and I soon learned that this man was embarking on his first flight—at the age of 97. He was going to see his newborn great-granddaughter. In awe of almost a century's worth of living wisdom, I said to him, trying to lend support, "Sir, you are very brave!" The conversation continued and he asked me what I did in my life, and I told him that I was a middle school teacher. There was a long pause. He then said, while gently patting my hand, "My dear, you are the one who is very brave!" This man was much wiser than I had recognized on that day. I have since discovered that bravery may well be one of the most important generics of successful middle school teaching.

One of the most unnerving facets of teaching young teens is coping with the fact that they have just discovered they can be the world's best critics and antagonists, and have decided to practice on you. Knowing how you hate hats, they wear them. Recalling how you became hysterical when they brought a case of small snakes to class, they bring them back during Teacher Appreciation Week. Having witnessed your despair when they've written a whole theme on a single sheet from a three inch memo pad, they proceed to make your suggested corrections on that same sheet. If you didn't know better, you might think that your students actually disliked you.

It's not that simple. Children of all ages yearn for adult structure and guidance. Early adolescents are no exception. In fact, because they are bound by nature to dislike themselves as they are uprooted from the security of childhood, they have a very special need for the security and strength found in the company of brave and confident adults—they just have unusual ways of showing it. Part of the problem is that today's preteen is often surrounded by adults who are still negotiating adolescence. TV programs alone abound with adults who don't know who they are or what they believe in. We live in a world where adult ambivalence is the norm. No wonder preteens are so anxious to test our clarity and maturity as adults. Still children at heart, they must wonder to whom they can turn for direction and support.

I am convinced that while middle school students seem bent on robbing others of the luxury of self-esteem, they are really just in search of adult heroes and heroines whose self-concepts defy destruction; whose power of personality offers a sheltering tree. So a fundamental quality essential to the effective middle school teacher is what might be called the *Psychic Edge;* that capacity to like yourself and know yourself and to convey with confidence to children that you do, and that threefold connected ability to be firm without anger, demanding without defensiveness and loving with little need for reciprocity. How can we develop and maintain the sense of confidence needed in our work with young teens? How can we nurture a sense of professional bravery?

Unfortunately, we cannot turn to the public for regular recognition and support. Nor can we turn to our students who expect us to support them. We have to turn within, and within our school. Some middle school teachers have found that meditation, yoga, biofeedback, prayer, and motivational tapes played while commuting to school, help prepare them for the day's barrage of professional assaults. Others have turned to programs of physical fitness and vitamin therapy to gain needed strength. Still others have relied on mirror therapy, an old stand-by. You simply go home, look into your favorite mirror, and tell yourself how marvelous you are for devoting your life to young teens.

While all of these methods may help, I am convinced that *teacher fellowship* may be the more profound vehicle for the development of the professional confidence and clarity we need. Athletic coaches have understood for years that game success requires pre-game collaborative psyching. Marathon runners likewise rely on one another for encouragement, inspiration and pride. Those who run successful businesses recognize the virtues of setting policy together. Middle school teachers cannot afford to go it alone. Every day is like a race between education and conflicting pressures; between bravery and humiliation. To win, we need each other.

Many middle schools are now organized for teacher collaboration. Teams of teachers have common planning time in these schools. Others eat lunch together, day in and day out. Do we use these opportunities to heal our wounded psyches, to plan strategy, set policy and improve instruction? Do we talk to other teachers in detail about the students we teach? Do we share our visions and our doubts? We should.

If you work in a school that is not organized for regular teacher collaboration and daily support, don't despair. Seek out a partner with whom you can work. Plan an occasional two-subject unit together. Joint planning can resurrect your buried teacher soul. Likewise, choose your in-school company wisely. When you see yourself sliding into educational ennui or weakening from repeated psychic blows, start spending time with the members of your staff who appear to have undergone their teacher training with the Green Beret. Those are the teachers who seem impervious to inspirational deterents. They smile while they work. Find out what keeps them going and energized.

These measures can help to renew our inspiration, but our excitement will quickly evaporate unless it is grounded in vision. While all of us entered the profession aspiring to make a difference in the lives of the children we teach, schools today have become so pressured to increase adademic achievement that it has grown increasingly difficult for teachers to entertain long-term, morally inbued goals which elevate teaching to more than a series of daily rituals. The children we teach, however, are not fooled. They hear a hollow echo in our words of wisdom. They know when we teach with conviction, as well as when we teach as mere shadows of our real teacher selves.

A solid Psychic Edge requires a mission. We need not, however, regenerate a mission from scratch. There are many national groups committed to understanding and educating the nation's young teens. Perhaps if we step outside our school and involve ourselves with collective efforts, we could redeem our professional sense of mission. Other efforts might include reading about early adolescents, occasionally sponsoring some noninstructional activity with students which could remind us that young teens are an especially needy group, and engaging in the discussion of philosophy at school.

Most importantly, this sense of mission must be conveyed to students. Do we tell our students what we believe about our teaching? Do we say, "Each and every one of you will learn, grow and progress in my class, no matter what!"? Students need to know that we are intent, determined and faithful to a mission. They need to hear us state our mission, such as "I am a teacher because I believe that wisdom, knowledge and competence produce happiness and an improved quality of life." They need to know we believe in our own capacity to teach, and in the significance of the work we do. They may still test us, but when they do, they will find strength, direction and purpose, and in that, they will find hope and inspiration.

Intimacy

Perhaps the structure and character of compulsory public education will always give rise to a certain degree of subversive student resistance. After all, should we be surprised that when a whole world of knowledge is readily available outside the school walls, children resist our attempts to expand their academic horizons inside, with vicarious, abstract and compartmentalized versions of the real thing? Surprisingly enough, successful middle school teachers seem to find ways to transform this natural resistance into trust. They seem to weasle their way into the hearts of young teens, building bridges of intimacy and connection that win students over, changing even the fighters to more intimate enemies.

Winning students over in the middle grades, however, can almost be a job in itself. Young teens are often disillusioned with school, they doubt themselves and they view the intentions of most adults with serious skepticism. Middle school teachers who do win students over have applied some very special principles to the work they do.

In general, they define themselves in broad, child-centered terms. They see themselves as both agents of academic achievement and student development. They acknowledge intimacy in teacher-student relationships as an educational basic and as a prerequisite to successful middle level teaching and learning. They collaborate regularly with others who teach the children they teach so they can know students not only through their eyes, but through the eyes of their fellow professionals. They plan with others to make school life more familiar and intimate for students. Finally, they wholeheartedly embrace the teacher-advisor role, reaching out to students as persons with social, emotional and intellectual needs.

Middle schools have begun to make available some school programs and practices which promote intimacy. The interdisciplinary teacher organization, where teachers and students are organized into smaller, more knowable groups has opened wide, new channels for teacher production of intimacy. Unfortunately, the mere organization of teacher teams does not guarantee results. Teachers need to willfully and collaboratively generate strategies that will implement the benefits of teaming.

Do we use the interdisciplinary teacher organization as a vehicle for the production of intimacy? We should. We can start by asking ourselves what connects a group of people in significant ways? How can our students feel and be known as persons? In the context of a teaming structure, there are a number of practices that teachers could use:

1. Plan and execute several team-level non-instructional or instructional events wherein teachers and students can be partners instead of opponents. Possibilities might include team intramurals, a halloween celebration, a frivolous and fun field trip, and special team days set aside for debates, exploration, independent study or special topics. Students and teachers need shared experiences which move beyond the academic demands of tests and achievement.
2. Create a team identity by voting on a team name, color-coding the team area, decorating the team area with team work, news, or photos, and preparing special team rituals to be carried on from year to year (e.g., smarty party for Honor Roll Students, special system for recognizing good team behavior, monthly best citizen, etc.)
3. Exchange regularly perceptions, ideas, experiences and findings among those teachers who share the same students. Not only will this help teachers sustain their needed Psychic Edge, it will make it possible for teachers to know their students as whole learners. Moreover, in the process of planning lessons, evaluating student progress, or conferring with parents, teachers can apply this knowledge so that students do, in fact, feel recognized as individuals as they see reflected in their school life the efforts of teachers to tailor plans to their special needs.
4. Take advantage of the school's program for teacher-student guidance. Middle schools frequently schedule time for teachers to attend to the personal development needs of students. In the context of a Homebase,

Teacher Advisory or Advisor-Advisee program, teachers should persevere with those 20-30 students, to know them better than any adult in the school, to care more about them regardless of personalities, to communicate their uniqueness to others in the school, to support them when they have failed or fumbled and to deliberately teach the affective objectives which set the program apart from mere free time or study hall. Moreover, in the role of adult guide and friend, middle school teachers should remember that intimacy and friendship are always built on positive shared experiences. As such, they shouldn't exclude from their plans, experiences and activities ones which, while not listed in an affective handbook, may strengthen their relationships with students. An occasional pot-luck breakfast, tie dying of T-shirts, making no-back cookies for the orphanage, taking a field trip, or making curtains for the room, all qualify as relationship-building experiences for middle school teaching.

With or without these intimacy promoting opportunities within the school plan, middle school teachers still need special measures in order to reach and touch students in significant ways. In fact, I am convinced that the one ingredient our teaching may lack at times is that well-known quality called *love.* In the book, *Time Enough For Love,* Robert Heinlein wrote:

> The more you love, the more you can love and the more intensely you love. Nor is there any limit on how many you can love. If a person had time enough, he could love all of that majority who are decent and just.

Perhaps you think *love* is not a word that belongs in a serious book of pedagogy. But of all the qualities of human interaction, love has always prevailed with universal appreciation, for its unchallenged capacity to heal, redeem, strengthen and enlighten. With early adolescents, we need an ever-widening circle of love. Whether we are in the halls where we find Fred sliding around the corner to Homebase or in the classroom where Steven has just unscrewed all of our doorknobs in his latest independent science endeavor, we need the capacity to value every child's potential for good. We need to believe in the worth of the young persons we teach. Teaching with love requires not only right thinking about the children we teach, but the ability to demonstrate that thinking at work. Since early adolescents not only suspect they are unlikeable, but often doubt their capacity to learn and succeed in school, it is absolutely imperative that we show unending faith. How?

In our lives, those who love us, believe in us, expect the best from us and tell us both. They make us uneasy with our delusions of failure. They may even make us squirm and wriggle because while we'd rather settle for half of what we could be, they push. They don't settle for less. They encourage us to rise above our own clouded expectations and in the end when we do, we feel good. As middle school teachers, that is just the way we can demonstrate love; that abiding belief in the worth of the young persons we teach.

Believing in the students we teach, however, is not always easy. So often middle school youngsters come to school like wounded pups, needy but snappy. Plagued by insecurities, they seem convinced that they will encounter failure or rejection, and in anticipation behave in unlikable ways. Very often when we are off-guard we let them trap us in their self-fulfilling web and we too begin to believe in their convincing counterfeit. In the end, they can say, "See, nobody cares and I'm not capable after all," and we've lost them.

Middle school teachers need to face the unlikeable with a reservoir of good will. At times, we may need to close our eyes and generate a vision of the incredible potential that stands masqueraded before us. But, we cannot afford to give up believing the very best about the youngsters we teach.

Perhaps one final way we can build bridges of connection and intimacy with our students is with touch. Touch is the most fundamental human sense, and probably the most authentic and unadulterated means of expression. Research has actually demonstrated that the more hugs we receive per day, the better we feel about ourselves and others. Yet so often we are afraid to touch or we simply forget that the heart is in the hand. Young teens are not too big to hug. I think they wish adults would remember that. They want us to know that behind their often obnoxious and worldly veneers, they are really just scared older children.

Enlivened Enlightment

Let's say you're a strong, clearly-defined and psyched teacher who loves to teach young teens. You proceed to teach fractions for three weeks and after you've all but stood on your head to succeed, you wonder if you did. Blank faces leave you with an unsettling feeling. What's missing? The students seem to be on your side, but while you're teaching, you suspect that they are riding up and down elevators of attention that are not stopping on your floor. Are there some secrets of success we can use to enhance our instructional effectiveness?

Just as early adolescents are drawn to the most clearly defined and stable adults, they are likewise most comfortable in clearly defined and stable classrooms. Young teens yearn for limits, reasonable rules, continuity and regularity. To create classroom structure that will help to eliminate confusion, anxiety and the need for constant controlling and reprimanding, try the following:

1. Define your own personal limits and let students know the unacceptables.

2. Create rituals of regularity. Determine daily rituals for beginning and ending class, for collecting and distributing work and materials, for organizing student folders or files, for asking and answering questions during discussions, for working in groups, for when students finish early, and for completing homework. Then, spend some portion of your first week of school with students, teaching these rituals. Make a chart with the rituals listed so reminders are simplified by reference to the chart.
3. Before beginning each daily lesson, start by reviewing the agenda for the day's activities. Early adolescents like to know what's ahead. Make it a point to let them know before they ask, with a statement at the opening of class or a list on the board.
4. Students need clear directions in order to get to work on the tasks we provide. Often disruptions occur because students did not listen to directions and then stumble and fumble until we finally reprimand them for disturbing the class. Try giving directions more slowly and use the blackboard or an overhead to demonstrate what the students are to do. Then, do a practice run with a few students and follow up with specific questions to determine if the students understand what they are to do. If the task is especially complex, ask students to work in two groups: those who feel they can get started right away, and those who would prefer some extra help at the outset. Or if you sense students would be reluctant to confess their confusion, spend the first five minutes making the rounds to the seats of students who you know are still unsure.
5. The maintenance of classroom order rests on the preservation of a positive structure. Have a system for acknowledging positive behavior, and use it from time to time. As an example, buy some stickers and as you walk by a student who has really made an effort to follow your rituals of regularity, stick him. An encouraging pat with specific praise works well, too. Use your rewards based on individual progress. Be specific! Tell the student exactly why he/she is receiving the reward. Positive structure also requires continuous monitoring. Middle school teachers can't afford to sit down. If you must, place yourself in the center of your classroom and offer Drive-Thru Service!

In an orderly classroom, it is far easier to teach effectively. The teaching methods we choose, however, can still make or break our success with young teens. Middle school teachers need an extensive and diversified repetoire in order to ignite the interests and solicit the energies of students. In general, they need *Enlivened Enlightenment*. Most of us have been encouraged, even pressed to believe, though, that once youngsters complete the fifth grade, it is time to leave all of the merriment of the elementary school classroom behind. Perhaps pushed by norms for test achievement, or discouraged by administrator reluctance to sanction instructional experimentation or intimidated by our own fear of failure, we often take the shortest and most direct route to our instructional ends. Unfortunately, the shortest distance between two points may be the most direct, but it is rarely the most interesting. After all, interstates lead us to our destination directly, but we may fall asleep at the wheel. That's exactly what often happens with lots of our students as we proceed to move them down an instructional highway that's efficient, but barren and uneventful.

We must choose the scenic instructional route for success in the middle. We must enliven to enlighten. Here are some secrets of success:

1. Color your instruction with variety. The more variety the better. Within a single class of 45 minutes, be sure there's a change in the kinds of activities students do so that students don't, for example, spend the whole period in the class seated reading Chapter Two. Don't use any one method alone, for three consecutive days. Don't let the textbook trap you.
2. Bring your students close to the real thing. Wear a sari to school the day you teach your lesson on Indian culture. Have your students dress up like the characters in the story they've just read. Have students paint the internal workings of the cardiovascular system on white shirts and wear them. Make paper airplanes while learning the principles of following directions. Take related field trips as often as you can.
3. Remember that smaller is better. Middle school students might perform better in smaller, more manageable skill groups where instruction can be geared to their needs and abilities. This is particularly useful when your diagnosis reveals a wide range in student skill and knowledge in an area you are about to teach. Smaller tasks interfaced with teacher guidance and direction can also assist less independent learners. Moreover, we should strive for quality, not quantity. By assigning shorter and smaller assignments, we might have the needed time to let students redo exercises until they get it right. And, last, smaller lectures are almost universally better.
4. Never underestimate the power of the potted plant. Decorate your classroom with plants, lively bulletins, inspiring posters, cozy reading corners, and student work. When you do, you demonstrate to students that you care about making the classroom an inviting place for them. The decoration and care of our classrooms is an important prerequisite for instructional success.
5. Experiment with self-directed learning strategies. Learning centers,

lap-packs or independent study contracts are all viable options. Have a regular *Listening Station* in your classroom for listening skills work. Have an on-going *Investigation Station* with monthly topics, which require students to gather information from a variety of sources. Let your independent learners work on study contracts such as the one included below. Make it possible for students who finish an assignment early to pursue productive and interesting alternatives. Your classroom should be humming with activity.

6. Facilitate student self-evaluation. Give each student a personal work folder with some kind of progress sheet inside. Have a system for student record-keeping so that they know what they need to do and what they've accomplished thus far.

INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACT

NAME: ____________ STARTING DATE: ____________
CLASS: ____________ DUE DATE ____________

TOPIC: ____________

WHAT I HOPE TO LEARN:
(1) ____________
(2) ____________
(3) ____________

MATERIALS & RESOURCES I'LL NEED:
(1) ____________ (4) ____________
(2) ____________ (5) ____________
(3) ____________ (6) ____________

THINGS I'LL DO TO LEARN ABOUT (____________):
(1) ____________
(2) ____________
(3) ____________
(4) ____________
(5) ____________
(6) ____________

WAYS I WILL DEMONSTRATE MY LEARNING:
(1) ____________
(2) ____________
(3) ____________

SIGNATURE(S): ____________ ____________

Go For It

When all is said and done, probably the most important generic quality middle school teachers need to be effective is best characterized by the familiar expression "Go For It!" Without question, teachers in the middle must not only be unusual, but somewhat brazen and bold. Success with young teens requires an enterprising spirit and a willingness to go a step beyond the limits that might otherwise discourage innovation, experimentation and even affection in our teaching. We can't afford to omit color and variety from our teaching simply because we have too much content to teach. We cannot reduce education to achievement despite the pressure that surrounds us. When we see the internal lights of our students grow dim, we should abandon the instructional highway and find some way to picnic on the side of the road. Who is going to give us permission to do what's really right for children? So if you think that by making a pizza with your students you could teach sequence or if you feel that by visiting an airport and looking at the structure of an airplane you could better demonstrate the principles of aerodynamics, do it. Forgiveness is always easier to get than permission. The "go for it" spirit should also be the message our students sense while they work with us. Communicating that drive to students may be one of the most important things we can do. Effective leaders from all walks of life inspire best with their own inspiration; drive the most with their own ambition. No matter what we teach, where we teach, or how we teach, teachers in the middle should take the elephant by the tail and **Go For It!**

X

Elliot Y. Merenbloom

Administering a Middle School

Since the early 1960's, many hundreds of schools have either been converted from junior high schools to middle schools or have been opened as middle schools. Each one of these middle schools is special in terms of the nature of its student body and the community it serves. Yet, they all have something in common, for they are all attempting to approach the middle school model described in the literature and expounded at professional conferences.

What is it that each school is trying to create? To what extent do those administrators responsible for school districts or individual schools understand the real meaning of the middle school concept? What is special about administering a middle school? To what extent is it possible to create a real middle school in each building housing early adolescents? For the past twenty years, educational administrators have tried to answer such questions as they performed the immediate day-to-day tasks of operating middle schools.

The real key to the successful implementation of the middle school concept is the leadership, guidance, and direction provided by the building principal. As a conductor directs a symphony orchestra, so does the principal direct the entire implementation process. Many of the specific ingredients that need to be carefully studied and integrated to achieve the proper effect or harmony are covered in other chapters in this volume. The focus in this chapter is on the role of the principal as both administrator and instructional leader. Developing middle schools has provided principals excellent opportunities for instructional leadership and has been a needed boost to the whole concept of modern school administration.

In many school districts, the conversion to middle school has represented a district-wide effort. In other cases, individual schools have converted with a minimum of central office leadership. In either situation, it is the building principal who has had the primary responsibility for successful program development.

In my own experience, the time was right to make some changes in the junior high school program as we knew it. We were truly a "miniature senior high school;" we were not really responsive to the needs of the early adolescent students in our building. Although the specific stimulus to change was overcrowding in one of our feeder elementary schools, the time had come to change many aspects of our program.

After attending two conferences on middle schools in 1976, I started by designing an inservice program to introduce the faculty and staff to the middle school concept. The courses not only enabled the participants to learn the theory but allowed the faculty to be involved in decision-making about the organization of the program.

As a result, the faculty began to demonstrate ownership in the program. This was evident in the pilot project for the 1977-78 school year as well as the full implementation tne following year. Teachers decided to use the interdisciplinary team approach for English, social studies, mathematics, and science. Teachers studied the curriculum to find opportunities to correlate content in the various subject areas. Teachers wrote home-base activities on orientation, conflict resolution, and decision-making. The teachers soon felt that this was their program — for it was.

Teachers played a key role in orienting the community to the middle school concept. A number of night meetings were held; students, parents and citizens alike were quick to realize that the conversion to middle school was not an administrative edict but rather a major effort on the part of the total school staff to improve the learning experience for students. As a result, the community was extremely supportive of the effort.

The expectations of the community were fulfilled. Achievement scores in reading and mathematics were higher, the suspension rate was reduced, student daily attendance percentages jumped tremendously, and, most important of all, student-teacher relationships soared. Teachers were viewed as "caring adults."

What is involved in implementing the middle school concept? Is there a formula or recipe one should follow? How does the principal administer a *real* middle school?

MAJOR TASKS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Administering a successful middle school involves nine major tasks: (1) translating theory into practice; (2) disclosing the basis for adopting the middle school concept; (3) establishing effective communication with constituency groups; (4) coordinating continuous staff development; (5) articulating with feeder schools; (6) insuring that the curriculum responds to the needs of the students; (7) creating a flexible school organization; (8) monitoring the effectiveness of the teaching teams as well as the daily instructional program; and (9) maintaining the commitment to the early adolescent and the middle school concept.

These responsibilities are not listed in any particular order. The sequence and importance vary according to the particular situation. Some of these tasks may be the primary responsibility of the school district, while others are the responsibility of the principal. In either case, these points must be evident to all who attend or work in the school. Finally, something of a spiral process is suggested. A portion of the strategies must be completed before proceeding to the next goal, others may be accomplished concurrently, and still others will need to be re-examined periodically.

(1) Translating Theory Into Practice

Since the early 1960s, the body of knowledge about middle level education has expanded greatly. New data about the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development of the early adolescent appear in the literature regularly. Descriptions of curriculum models for pre-pubescent and pubescent learners as well as organizational options for middle schools can be readily located. Journals, monographs, textbooks, filmstrips, and videotapes are now available from various professional organizations and publishers. Conferences about middle grades education are sponsored by major educational groups in various parts of the country. Middle school principals need to be committed to keeping up with the literature and to be active professionally. Since much of middle level education is relatively new, there is a special responsibility for administrators who work at this level to be students. Finally, they must be committed to trying some of these ideas on a limited or pilot basis in their buildings.

Middle school principals have, for the past twenty years, adopted successful programs, techniques, and strategies derived from theory and put them into practice. Team organization, flexible schedules, and teacher-advisory programs, for instance, have emerged from an analysis of theory. As a result, the middle school movement has expanded. A careful and consistent study of theory will help the middle school administrator establish both long and short range goals. Both types of goals result from the creativity of the building principal who should be constantly looking for ideas that will meet the needs of the students in a specific community.

(2) Disclosing The Basis For Adopting The Middle School Concept

In concert with central office leadership, middle level principals must help students, teachers, parents, and other taxpayers understand the rationale for adopting the middle school format.

Since 1964, middle schools have been created for such diverse reasons as court-ordered desegregation, increasing enrollment, declining enrollment, a desire to jump on the bandwagon, and a desire to improve the learning experiences for early adolescents. Whatever the reason or reasons, the community should know why a school district or an individual school is organizing a middle school.

Ideally, the decision to change the organization and the program should be based on what we know about the nature of the early adolescent student. The work of Tanner (1962) and the findings of the Boyce Medical Study (1973) have alerted educators to the fact that puberty is reached earlier, that growth is uneven, and that individual differences are tremendous among students in a seventh or eighth grade classroom. The work of Epstein and Toepfer (1979) in the area of brain growth periodization is providing further insight into the intellectual process. Middle school educators should become more aware of the social and emotional changes during this transitional period. Finally, the work of Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) and others in the field of moral development has special meaning for the middle level curriculum.

As this information is reviewed, implications will be identified for the organizational structure of the middle level school as well as such critical areas as curriculum, the role of the teacher, the nature of the learning environment, and the teaching of reading. What we are learning about the nature of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students provides a strong basis for adopting the middle school format.

All of the constituency groups should know the educational meaning of the term "middle school." Each school district or individual faculty needs to develop a specific definition and share this with the community. This definition can be revised as the program becomes more complex and/or the community becomes more knowledgeable. All should know exactly what to expect from schooling at this level, and the community should know how and when the middle school concept will be implemented and evaluated.

The building principal plays a major role in disclosing the basis for adopting the middle school concept. In a systematic way, the principal must be able to explain the philosophy and rationale but, at the same time, be able to anticipate early problems and develop plans to resolve them. A positive approach should be utilized.

(3) Establishing Effective Communication With Constituency Groups

The successful middle school principal must communicate with many constituencies: students, faculty, parents, Board members, and community groups. The principal needs, therefore, to be a model of good communication skills with each of these groups.

Though often overlooked, the students themselves need to understand how the middle school will be different from the junior high they anticipated. At the time of initial conversion or inauguration, as well as at key points in each school year, students need to hear explanations of the middle school concept and realize how the proposed program is for their benefit. Via assemblies, newsletters, team meetings, student government organizations, announcements over the intercom, and informal contacts in the hallways or cafeteria, the principal must communicate effectively with students.

Certainly, teachers must be involved in the transition to a middle school and in the implementation of the various aspects of its program. They must not only see the benefits for students but understand what this means for them as professionals. The principal can communicate with teachers on these topics through faculty meetings, visits to team and department meetings, and the staff development program. Teachers must feel that they are a part of the program and that they contribute daily to its success. New roles will evolve for guidance counselors, reading teachers, and other support personnel so these professionals will need to re-examine their roles in light of the middle school concept.

Successful middle school principals take the time to communicate with the parent organization as well as civic and community groups. Few, if any, adults attended a middle school and so few understand what a middle school is. Yet, since these are primary constituents, they need to be knowledgeable and informed in order to support the school program each year.

Board of Education personnel as well as the members of the superintendent's staff must be knowledgeable about the individual schools within the district. Therefore, it is important that the building principal communicates effectively with these groups.

Effective communication is, of course, a two-way process. On the one hand, the principal must be able to utilize a variety of ways to keep people informed and every opportunity should be used to inform people about the middle school concept. In these situations, the principal should be positive and enthusiastic, yet realistic. On the other hand, the principal must be a good listener. In addition to hearing the content or factual information, the principal must be able to identify the affect or the feelings that lie behind the words. When there is a conflict or a difference of opinion, the administrator must play the key role in resolving these differences, while still maintaining the commitment to the middle school concept.

(4) Coordinating Continuous Staff Development

Since very few teachers received initial preparation for teaching in the middle school, coordinating continuous staff development is a major responsibility of the middle level principal. Staff development is the means by which teachers can learn how to implement a new program being developed, contribute to the development of the program, and have the opportunity to grow professionally. A key word is *continuous* for staff development activities need to be on-going. A single summer workshop is simply insufficient.

An effective staff development program features definite goals, objectives, and organizational plan; a continuous, sequential effort; a sensitivity to the needs of the teachers; active involvement of the participants; an open, honest assessment of the various activities and the middle school program being developed; the opportunity to add new dimensions to the program; and strong leadership on the part of the principal as well as complementary leadership emerging from the faculty.

Considering the number of teachers assigned to middle level schools after years of work at the elementary or high school levels as well as those who worked in the traditional junior high school, staff development is the means by which teachers can be re-tooled on the job.

A process/content approach is suggested for creating the staff development program. Process refers to the techniques or procedures to achieve a goal such as an inservice course, summer workshop, classroom observation and conferences, department meetings, team planning periods, meetings with team leaders, attendance at seminars and conventions, journal information, and visits to other schools.

Content is all of the subject matter or topics contained in the curriculum for middle grades teachers. Examples of content are the psychology of early adolescence, key documents, teaching strategies, models for curriculum or organizational options. Actually, it is the interaction of process and content that facilitates real learning and motivation on the part of those involved in a staff development experience.

Administering a middle school involves teaching the faculty how to provide instruction in a middle school. Principals who do the best job in the area of staff development usually do the best job of creating exciting and effective middle level schools.

(5) Articulating With Feeder Schools

The middle school administrator has a double responsibility in terms of articulating with feeder schools. Not only must the individual work closely with the elementary school, but also with the receiving high school as both of these levels impact on the nature of the middle school experience.

Middle school programs, especially in grade six, should build on the success of elementary education although the focus on individual students and the teaching of skills should extend beyond the elementary school program.

The community usually does not recognize the distinctive nature of the middle school. Middle school teachers and administrators need to work together to promote understanding and allay the fears of both children and parents about leaving the elementary program and entering a middle school. Inviting students and parents to visit the middle school is an obvious early step.

Administrators, counselors, and teachers should be available to answer the specific questions and concerns that exist. The more fifth grade teachers know about the middle school program, the smoother the adjustment should be for incoming sixth graders. Although some apprehension among children is normal, it is imperative that all middle school personnel recognize their responsibilities to be supportive.

As the end of the middle school experience approaches, eighth graders should be prepared for what awaits them at the senior high school both in terms of the curriculum and extra-curricular programs. It is imperative that the high school staff also understand the middle school concept so that they can help pupils make the transition into grade 9. The importance of the guidance function in both the entrance and exit stages clearly calls for strong support and leadership on the part of the middle level administrator.

(6) Insuring That The Curriculum Responds To The Needs Of The Student

A distinctive feature of the middle school concept is a special approach to curriculum. Although a few middle schools have not changed their approach to curriculum, most middle level schools have taken a closer look at curriculum and have started to identify the extent which the curriculum responds to the needs of the early adolescent student.

The middle school curriculum can be viewed as consisting of three components: organized knowledge, skills, and personal development. The term organized knowledge refers to the content or subject matter which is the heart of all of the subjects in the school's curriculum—English, social studies, mathematics, science, foreign language, art, music, home economics, industrial arts, physical education, and any other subject included. Early adolescents are ready to be challenged by new subject areas and new aspects of continuing subjects.

The skills program represents an effort of teachers to teach specific competencies in such areas as reading, writing, listening, computing, and human relations. These skills have been emphasized in elementary school programs, but receive less attention in high school so that the middle level is often the last chance for direct instruction in some skills.

Personal development includes both information and activities that are needed by early adolescents to facilitate their rapid and critical growth and development. The more middle school students can understand these growth processes, the better they will be able to handle them successfully and emerge as well-adjusted young adults. Examples of this curriculum component include home-base or teacher/advisory programs; special interest/exploratory experiences; and co-curricular activities.

There are two applications of this curriculum model. First, the curriculum for each content area (English, industrial arts, music, etc.) should reflect organized knowledge, skills, and personal development with a reasonable balance of the three components. Also, topics should be relevant to the maturity level of students.

The second application involves the functioning of an interdisciplinary team as it works to implement the curriculum for the students of that team. This team of teachers should make every effort to correlate, integrate, or link organized knowledge, skills, and personal development topics in that total program designed by the teachers. For example, the topic of *stereotypes* could be correlated in English, social studies, science, and mathematics. All four teachers could have a skill-of-the-week, such as reading for main ideas or could work together on a home-base unit entitled "Resolving Conflict."

Building principals should work to insure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the students by helping teachers to (1) assess the needs of their students, (2) correlate content and skills whenever possible, and (3) evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teachers should be encouraged to utilize hands-on, activity-centered types of lessons and to provide concrete examples early in the concept development process. Teachers should learn to move from the concrete to the abstract. By observing teachers in the classroom, meeting with teachers on a regular basis, and maintaining communication with students, the principal is in an excellent position to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum.

(7) Creating A Flexible School Organization

Flexibility is a key word in the middle school. Since pupils are going through a major period of transition and teachers are learning to work in teaching teams, flexibility must be an integral part of the middle school experience. Classes do not need to change every 50 minutes; the order of the day can vary; and teachers can make decisions about the length of modules and the number of pupils in a particular instructional group.

Initially, the opportunity for flexible scheduling must be provided for within the master schedule. Block-of-time occurs when two or more teachers of two or more subjects teach those classes during the same period of time. For example, the English, social studies, mathematics, and science teachers in grade 7 may teach the same four classes during periods 1-5 each day. These teachers also need common time outside of the block so they can plan cooperatively.

Benefits of this block-of-time approach are (1) each teacher can teach his/her subject; (2) teachers can correlate content, skills, and personal development activities; (3) time modules can be adjusted by the teachers; (4) pupils can have more time in certain subjects when needed; (5) special activities can be planned for the pupils of the team; and (6) rotating schedules can be developed.

Teams of teachers may sub-divide the 250 minutes into six or seven modules so that students may have a reading program and/or home-base activity in addition to the English, social studies, mathematics, and science classes. Also, teams may decide to rotate the schedules so that no section has the advantage or disadvantage of having a certain subject at the beginning or the end of the school day.

Actually, the master schedule becomes an outline or guide for flexible and modular scheduling strategies that are created and utilized by individual teaching teams. The principal can only create the environment for flexibility; it is up to the teachers to take advantage of the opportunity.

Middle school principals should encourage teams of teachers to identify local options that respond to the needs of the students on that team. Local options are those decisions that can be made by individual teaching teams either within guidelines established by the school system or in situations where guidelines have not been established. Local options might include correlating content, selecting a skill-of-the-week, selecting topics for home-base activities, using flexible scheduling, and re-grouping students for instruction. As a result, the responsibility for developing daily, weekly, and monthly schedules should rest with the team. The more often a team of teachers uses local options, the more likely it is that the teachers are responding to the needs of the students.

(8) Monitoring The Effectiveness Of The Teaching Teams As Well As The Daily Instructional Program

Typically, principals at all levels spend a considerable amount of their time observing classes, conferring with teachers, and evaluating the competencies of staff members. This process helps the principal to monitor the effectiveness of the daily instructional program; and, more importantly, teachers have the opportunity to grow professionally as a result of this exercise of instructional leadership by the building administrator.

In middle schools that have teaching teams as part of the organizational structure, the principal is also involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the teaching teams. Principals can help teams to be successful by establishing reasonable guidelines for forming teams, providing team building activities, encouraging flexibility, enhancing the image and role of the team leader, requesting team planning reports on a weekly basis, and establishing a time and procedure for teams to complete a self-evaluation process. In the middle school, the principal should monitor both the daily instructional process as well as the function of the teams. There will be points of overlap.

(9) Maintaining The Commitment To The Early Adolescent And The Middle School Concept

The principal, as well as other members of the leadership team in the local school, must have a strong commitment to the early adolescent and the middle school concept. There will be times when the concept or some aspect of the program is challenged. Questions will be raised by people who do not fully understand the concept. Some of these persons may be on the faculty; some may be parents; some may not have children in school; and some may be members of the Superintendent's Staff or the Board of Education. The more these people can understand the middle school concept, the better they will support it.

At times of financial or contractual difficulty, it may be easier to abandon the middle school concept than to support it and find alternate solutions. In an era of declining enrollment, it may be easier to return to a departmentalized organization in grade 7 than to find a compromise that retains the identity and integrity of the interdisciplinary team. If the budget is cut, it may be easier to abandon team planning periods or eliminate funds for a summer workshop to train teachers to implement a home-base program. As such conflicts arise, all educators and community members should remember the major reason for having middle schools — the improvement of the learning experiences provided early adolescent students.

There are some definite ways to sustain this commitment. Periodically, it will be helpful to up-date the entire educational community on significant aspects of early adolescent development. Everyone can benefit from the opportunity to attend a convention or seminar on middle grades students. Appropriate articles that appear in the literature should be shared with constituency groups. Novel ways of establishing relationships with middle level students should be implemented on a pilot basis.

Middle level administrators have a major responsibility to maintain the commitment to the early adolescent and the middle school concept. In addition to defending the program at the time of a major problem, this commitment should be evident in the school and the community on a day-by-day basis. The dividends will be apparent to all who take the time to look at them.

SUMMARY

Administering a middle school involves putting the theory of the middle school concept into practice on a daily basis. For the past twenty years, building principals have played a key role in creating meaningful learning environments for students in grades 6, 7, and 8. They have done this by being both task-oriented and people-oriented. The future of the middle school movement will continue to rest largely on the ability of these building administrators to provide this high level of instructional leadership and motivation.

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XI

C. Kenneth McEwin

Preparing Teachers for the Middle School

The long sought goal of providing early adolescent learners with programs designed to meet their individual needs and interests remains an elusive one. Although positive advances have been made, many of the goals of middle level education have not been fully realized because of numerous interwoven factors. Paramount among these factors is the failure of teacher preparation institutions, state departments of education, and the profession itself to demand specially-designed programs to prepare teachers and other professionals for careers in middle level education. Far too many teachers and other middle level personnel are simply unprepared for the task of understanding, coping with, and educating early adolescents.

Since the beginning of the junior high school movement, middle level schools have been staffed primarily by those whose training and interest lie at other levels. Despite repeated calls for specialized middle grades preparation programs spanning fifty years, the large majority of today's middle level personnel were trained by departments of secondary education with a heavy emphasis on subject area content or by departments of elementary education with emphasis on teaching young children.

Teacher preparation institutions have been reluctant to establish specialized middle level programs and certification agencies have permitted teachers with a great variety of preparations to teach in the middle grades. This unfortunate practice remains commonplace today in most states. One result of this situation is that middle level schools are often staffed by those who are waiting to be "promoted" to the senior high school and by elementary teachers waiting to be assigned to elementary classrooms. Since the prevailing attitude proclaims "no specialized training needed," middle grades teachers seldom seek additional training relating directly to the middle level. Furthermore, when and if they seek this preparation it is often unavailable.

This dilemma has created, or at least perpetuated, one of the most serious problems in middle school education — that of making middle level schools miniature versions of high schools or extensions of elementary schools in some situations. This problem continues despite overwhelming evidence that neither model fits the educational needs of early adolescent learners. Regretably, there is little likelihood the problem will diminish significantly until persons trained for and dedicated to middle level education are given responsibility for middle level schooling.

Messages From the Past

Neglect of the middle level by teacher preparation institutions has been evident for many years. Koos stated in 1927 that "Professional colleges are sympathetic with the junior high school movement, but are more disposed to emphasize the training of administrators and other leaders in the field than the training of junior-high-school teachers. They also stress the training of secondary-school teachers, but the tradition is for these trainees to look forward to work in senior and four-year high schools rather than in junior high schools" (p. 454).

Although pedagogical considerations were a part of the early rationale for establishing intermediate schools, it is generally accepted that true educational and curricular rationale did not develop until the 1920s (Gruhn & Douglass, 1947; Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1961; Toepfer, 1982). Paralleling this development was the recognition that specially-trained teachers were needed if the movement to improve instructional programs for early adolescents was to be fully successful. Floyd, for example, advocated such training in 1932.

The early junior high school was largely an administrative reorganization of the secondary school, and early reviews of program change reveal that little more was accomplished than the extension of secondary approaches down into grades seven through nine (Toepfer, 1982). This legacy is one that is difficult to overcome and has contributed to the practice of employing a great many secondary trained teachers in middle level schools. It has also caused, at least to some extent, the relegation of the middle level of schooling to secondhand status and the view of it simply as a place to "get students ready" for senior high school. This may be one function of middle level education, but it should not override other, more important purposes and functions.

An additional problem experienced during the early years of the junior high school movement was the low prestige given to teaching at the "junior" school. The practice of paying junior high school teachers lower salaries than senior high school teachers and hiring teachers with less professional training to teach in the lower middle grades has contributed to the lack of appeal associated with a middle grades teaching career. Although salary parity has been accomplished in recent years, a lack of prestige continues to be associated with middle grades teaching.

A number of other factors have contributed to the lack of interest in teaching at the middle level: (a) a popular tradition about the appeal of working with young children; (b) interest in teaching a particular subject in depth: (c) lack of understanding of the goals and functions of middle level schooling; and (d) lack of knowledge regarding early adolescents which at times verges on fear and dislike (Howard & Stoumbis, 1970).

Employment and assignment practices in schools, the nature of teacher education programs, and certification practices indicate that a widespread commitment to excellence in middle level education was not widely realized during the junior high school movement. As noted by Southworth (1968), the record regarding teacher preparation for junior high schools was not notable.

Middle Level Teacher Preparation Today

The number of middle level schools has increased to almost 12,000 according to information from the U.S. Department of Education. This rapid growth, however, has not been even faintly paralleled by a corresponding growth in teacher preparation programs for middle level personnel.

In a national survey of over 1400 middle level principals, 41 percent reported having no teachers in their school with special middle level preparation. Of those principals reporting some preparation, 72 percent listed only inservice programs, with only 44 percent listing university courses (Valentine *et al.*, 1981). McEwin and Clay (1982) reported similar results from a national survey of 408 middle and junior high schools, finding that only 38 percent of middle schools and 41 percent of junior high schools had teachers with special middle level training. Sixty-one percent of the responding principals reported having no teachers in their schools with specialized middle level training.

With this lack of professional preparation, it would seem logical to expect specialized programs to be readily available in colleges and universities in the 1980s. However, a 1981 survey found that only 162 (30 percent) of 538 responding institutions had specialized middle level teacher education programs. Further, only 23 percent of the institutions without middle level preparation programs were considering establishing them (McEwin & Alexander, 1982).

The 1981 survey results provide little encouragement when compared to earlier surveys. Krinsky and Pumerantz (1972) conducted a survey in 1970 and found only 23 percent (37) of 160 accredited teacher training institutions responding had specialized middle level preparation programs, and only 11 percent (18) had undergraduate courses or programs. A 1973 survey found only a slightly smaller percent of institutions (27 percent) offering undergraduate programs than did the 1981 survey (Gatewood & Mills, 1973). Only about five percent more of the institutions had established programs (McEwin & Alexander, 1982).

The results of these surveys clearly demonstrate that teacher preparation programs have not kept pace with the demand for middle level teachers. Lack of specialized training for other middle level personnel is also apparent, with only 17 percent of responding institutions in the 1981 survey providing any specialized courses or programs for middle level principals, and only nine percent for middle level counselors (Alexander & McEwin, 1982).

Middle Level Certification

Middle level teachers with specialized training are not widely available because very few states have mandatory certification for teaching at that level. As long as distinctive certification does not exist, middle level classrooms will continue to be staffed primarily by teachers who have no special preparation for their task and, in many cases, do not wish to be teaching at this level. The practices of allowing almost anyone with any kind of professional certification to teach in middle level schools has perpetuated the mediocrity evident in all too many middle level classrooms.

Some respondents to the 1981 survey of teacher education institutions indicated that no specialized preparation programs are planned until special middle level teacher certification programs are in effect (McEwin & Alexander, 1982). Many state department of education officials, conversely, state that no specialized certification requirements are planned because teacher education institutions do not have preparation programs for middle level teachers. This dilemma is ludicrous and must be overcome through the combined efforts of teacher education institutions, state certification agencies, and the teaching profession itself. American education can ill afford another decade of avoidance of this critical issue.

State departments of education which fail to initiate special certificate areas are remiss in their obligation to protect the public welfare when they allow teachers who have completed no specialized preparation to teach in middle grades classrooms. As noted by Popper (1957), a principal function of certification in education, as with licensure in medicine, law, and other professions, is to protect the public from incompetence. Secondary certified and trained teachers are not allowed to teach elementary children, and elementary trained teachers are not allowed to teach high school students.

However, middle level education has been offered no such protection by state certification agencies.

There is reason, however, to believe that a movement toward adoption of specialized certification is gaining momentum. Numerous state departments of education have established special middle level teacher certification plans. A 1982 study by McEwin and Allen (1983) found that 25 states had some form of middle level teacher certification, with such certification being mandatory in nine states. This number represents a substantial increase over past years. For example, a similar study by Pumerantz (1969) in 1968 identified only two states with such certification.

A comparable study by George, McMillan, Malinka, and Pumerantz in 1975 reported eight states with such certification, and a study conducted by Gillan in 1978 found 15 states had adopted special middle level teacher certification. Findings are not encouraging when other special personnel are considered, with only three states reporting certification programs for middle level principals, and only two having such certification for middle level counselors (McEwin & Allen, 1983).

Special certification is clearly tied to the widespread establishment of middle level teacher education programs and shapes the nature of those programs. Eighty percent of the 162 teacher education institutions reporting specialized programs in the McEwin and Alexander (1982) study were located in states having specific middle level teacher certification (McEwin & Allen, 1983).

Certification and teacher education are closely associated. Prospective and inservice teachers are unlikely to prepare for careers for which there is no license to practice. Alturism alone will not cause the many thousands of teachers teaching at the middle level to return to the universities, or go elsewhere, to refine their skills and increase their knowledge. Sound certification requirements should be met by and, in fact, reflect strong middle level teacher preparation programs (Alexander & McEwin, 1982).

An additional problem at the higher education level parallels that in lower schools—there are few people there with specialized knowledge and/or professional commitment to quality middle grades education. Most professors have spent their careers interested in and working with other academic disciplines to be taught at other levels. Therefore, there is a danger that middle grades education will continue to receive low priority in many institutions of higher education. Mandatory certification requirements will guard against this lack of attention and force efforts on the establishment of viable middle grades preparation programs.

Frequently, existing middle grades certification patterns coexist with more traditional certificates, i.e. K-8 and 7-12. Because of the overlap permitted, a middle grades certificate is viewed as highly restrictive. Thus, many prosepective teachers who are initially interested in middle grades teaching careers select other training programs which may certify them for a wider range of grade levels, for example grades K-8, rather than 7-9.

In states with mandatory certification, however, capable students are being attracted to middle grades degree programs because of the more clearly defined certification requirements and because of their success in obtaining desirable teaching positions. Also, teachers who have been teaching out-of-field for many years are returning to teacher preparation institutions for additional training and advanced certification at the middle grades level. These things are happening in Georgia, for instance, where distinctive middle grades certification was established a few years ago.

The dilemma caused by large overlaps in certification has been eliminated in some states. Certification levels in North Carolina, for example, are now K-4, 4-6, 6-9, and 9-12. These choices cause prospective teachers to select their levels carefully and thoughtfully and prepare specifically for them. These more narrow bands of certification allow and require teacher education institutions to establish specialized degree programs aimed at specific developmental age groups. Unrealistic practices, such as grouping prospective kindergarten and seventh grade teachers in the same university methods classes, are minimized in institutions with specific middle level programs. This recognition of the importance and uniqueness of middle level education will undoubtedly increase the effectiveness of teacher education classes and programs.

The Nature of Preparation Programs

Current middle level teacher education programs closely reflect components suggested in the literature (George & McEwin, 1978; Alexander & McEwin, 1982). The problem with middle level preparation programs lies not in poor design, but rather in scarcity and low enrollments. There is clear consensus regarding the components needed in such programs (Koos, 1927; Vars, 1969; Compton, 1973; McEwin, 1983; George & McEwin, 1978; Alexander & McEwin, 1982). These components generally include: (a) a thorough knowledge of early adolescents; (b) emphasis on middle level curriculum and instruction; (c) broad academic backgrounds, including concentrations in at least two areas at the undergraduate level; (d) emphasis on specialized methods and reading courses; and (e) early and continuing field experiences in good middle level schools. Middle level principals (Valentine, Clark, Nickerson, & Keefe, 1981; Keefe, Clark, Nickerson, & Valentine, 1983), middle level teachers (De Medio & Kish, 1983; Boyer, 1983), and middle level university professors (De Medio & Helms, 1984) identify these components as essential to effective middle level teacher preparation.

Results from research examining the beliefs of middle level teachers and principals regarding the appropriateness of specialized middle level preparation programs have been supportive. A recent study by Boyer (1983), for example, found that teachers felt they had not been prepared for teaching effectively at the middle level and that specialized preparation programs would have been helpful.

Similar results were revealed in earlier studies conducted in Indiana (Walker, 1959; Stainbrook, 1972). In the Stainbrook study, 91 percent of junior high school teachers and 87 percent of middle school teachers indicated a specialized curriculum for professional preparation would be helpful for intermediate teachers. Additionally, a 1971 study found that over 90 percent of middle level principals believed teachers should be prepared specifically to teach in junior high and middle schools by programs distinctive from both elementary and high school preparation programs (Brown & Howard, 1972).

Selected institutions and some state department certification agencies have made significant gains in recent years. North Carolina, for example, has mandatory middle level certification (grades 6-9) with only one year of overlap with elementary (K-4; 4-6) and secondary (9-12) certificates. North Carolina has also established required middle level competencies for middle level certification and has established a separate degree in Middle Grades Education. Trends emerging in North Carolina, Georgia, and other states give hope of the possibility that specialized degree programs and certification requirements will become more widely available in the future.

Graduate and Inservice Programs

Although the primary focus of this chapter has been preservice middle level teacher education, it is important to note that graduate and inservice programs are crucial. As pointed out in a 1981 position paper of the National Middle School Association, most teachers who will be teaching during the next 10 years are already employed and most have received little or no specific preparation for the middle grades. It was also noted that those with adequate preservice preparation need continuous retraining and renewal ("Preparing Teachers for," 1981). Regardless of the amount of progress made in improving preservice programs, there is a great need for graduate level courses and programs. However, in 1982 only 13 percent of teacher preparation institutions reported having middle level masters programs, with only three percent offering doctoral programs (Alexander & McEwin, 1982).

Many school districts have made major efforts to provide middle level personnel with the specialized skills and knowledge needed through inservice programs. These programs have no doubt been beneficial, but the efforts have been mostly short term in nature and have not always resulted in lasting change. Although inservice activities certainly play an important role in middle level education, middle level preparation should no more be turned over to inservice efforts than should other areas of education. If middle level education is to ever reach full success, there must be a growing number of personnel specifically educated for and committed to working with early adolescents. Inservice activities alone are simply not sufficient.

The majority of practicing teachers will be returning to colleges and universities only if pursuing advanced degrees, seeking recertification, or earning renewal credits. Considering the wide variety of backgrounds of middle level teachers, graduate level courses and programs which focus on the unique knowledge, skills, and teaching strategies needed for effective teaching at the middle level are essential. Plans combining graduate middle level certification with advanced degree programs have been successful in some states and should be expanded. These plans have proven popular with teachers and their employers. The opportunities created to improve one's skills while earning an advanced degree with its accompanying financial rewards are sufficient incentives for many middle level teachers to seek such programs.

Essential Program Components

Components considered essential for effective middle level preparation programs have been suggested in the literature for at least 35 years (Elliot, 1949; Armstrong, 1977). Competencies needed for effective middle level teaching have frequently been identified (Brogdon, 1978; Strahan, 1980; Walter & Fanslow, 1980; Winchester, 1981) and model programs described (Compton, 1973; Rottier, 1976; McEwin, 1977; Powell, 1978). Yet, middle level preparation programs remain unavailable to the vast majority of prospective and practicing teachers.

One key to future success lies in the establishment of additional exemplary middle level preparation programs which reflect the components identified. These components fall into the major categories of: (a) general education; (b) academic content preparation; (c) professional sequence; and (d) field experiences.

It is generally believed that preservice teacher candidates should have more academic specialization than elementary teachers and on a different basis than that required of secondary subject matter specialists. (Alexander, Williams, Compton, Hines, Prescott, & Kealy, 1969). Two fields of academic concentration are generally required at the undergraduate level to broaden the perspective of teachers and to demonstrate the relationship between various subject areas, for example mathematics and science (Compton, 1973). These academic content areas generally include a variety of disciplines within each academic area. For example, social studies concentrations may include courses in history, geography, economics, anthropology, and political science as compared to a single subject specialization taken by secondary majors which may focus only on history.

The professional sequence typically focuses on knowledge of early adolescence, the nature of programs needed by middle level learners, and effective strategies for teaching at this level. Courses such as "Teaching the Emerging Adolescent," "Nature of the Middle/Junior High School Learner," and "Middle School Curriculum and Instruction" are included in exemplary programs. These courses focus on the unique characteristics of early adolescents and their implications for instruction and schooling. Direct experiences with middle level students and specialized methods courses are also important parts of successful preparation programs. Emphasis in methods courses is generally placed on courses relating directly to academic concentrations selected, with at least one course in teaching reading at the middle level included. Courses in special education, educational psychology, educational foundations, guidance, and early adolescent literature are examples of other professional courses often included.

Intensive field experiences are an important component of successful middle level preparation programs. Many undergraduate programs require field experiences beginning in the freshman or sophomore years and continuing through student teaching. These field experiences allow prospective teachers to make early career decisions and offer many opportunities to learn directly from experiences with middle level students and their teachers. Some programs also provide interdisciplinary teaching opportunities in the field. Advanced practicum experiences designed primarily for those who have little or no middle level teaching experience are provided by many graduate preparation programs.

Toward More Middle Level Teacher Preparation - A Summary

Much remains to be accomplished in the preparation and certification of middle level teachers and other middle level personnel. The problem with middle level preparation programs is not their poor quality, but rather their small numbers and low enrollments. Although the number of middle level schools has continued to increase dramatically, only limited progress has been made in the establishment of corresponding numbers of preparation programs for the middle level. Some improvement has been made in recent years, but the majority of teacher preparation institutions still have no specialized middle level courses or programs. This dangerous situation persists despite wide agreement in the literature and among practicing professionals that such programs are needed. Considerable consensus also exists regarding the appropriate nature of preparation programs, and model programs have been available for at least a decade. It is difficult to educate for a new program few have experienced, but many do have experience and sufficient knowledge is available to guide program development.

Inservice education is useful for continuing education, but is inadequate for *initial* preparation. Full-term preparation programs which focus specifically on the unique characteristics and needs of early adolescents are prerequisite to successful middle level teaching. Effective programs containing well-developed courses and practica emphasizing program design, teaching strategies, and other related areas are essential. Only when these kinds of programs are widely available and required for middle level teaching will the potential to significantly improve middle level education be fully realized.

A coalition of representatives from teacher preparation institutions, state departments of education, and the profession must work cooperatively to establish programs which promote excellence and guarantee that middle level classrooms will not be accessible to minimally-trained teachers whose interest and expertise lie at other levels and in other disciplines. Middle level classrooms need and deserve dedicated and enthusiastic professionals who have the special expertise required for successful teaching.

There are growing numbers of teachers and other professionals who enjoy and take pride in middle level education. For the most part, however, these individuals have spent years seeking role definition and attempting to compensate for their lack of appropriate preparation. Middle level education cannot afford to depend solely on the possibility that large numbers of teachers will be successful in this struggle. Poorly prepared and uncommitted school personnel cannot do the job required.

Despite many years of uncertainty, procrastination, and frustration, new opportunities for establishing exemplary middle level teacher preparation programs and their accompanying certifications are emerging. Much effort must be expended by all concerned to promote the establishment of undergraduate and graduate preparation programs and the mandatory certification of middle level personnel. Only when these preparation programs are universally available and well-attended will the promise of middle level education approach its full potential.

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XII

Conrad F. Toepfer, Jr.

Staff Development and In-Service Education

A STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

"If you can't have what you'd like, you've got to like what you have!" Those words of my mother were frequently spoken as we made our way through life in the 1930's. At age 87, she still will use that expression when one has to make the best of what exists in a particular situation. That attitude is particularly important as middle level educators struggle to make the best of resources at hand. The middle level school's relationship with the elementary and high school is unfortunately too similar to that of a boy in a family with an older and younger brother. The middle child gets his older brother's outgrown clothes because they are still too good to throw away. In like manner, the middle level school gets left-over and outgrown facilities, materials, and even staff from the high school. The middle brother has his brother's pants altered, and the middle school has staff development for the displaced teachers it inherits!

Toward Better Prepared Middle Level Staffs

If middle level schools had a "theme song," it might well be Barbra Streisand's rendering of "Second Hand Rose." In staffing matters, we have too long lived with cases of elementary and high school trained teachers who wind up in our buildings because of staff surplus at the other two levels. The lack of definitive, middle level teacher education programs which appropriately differ from elementary and high school ones mean middle level schools seem always to be in the "re-tread" business. This has been particularly true in the last twenty years as the middle school movement has taken hold.

The recent period of teacher surplus and retrenchment has brought even greater numbers of displaced teachers to the middle level. In many cases, the displaced elementary or high school teacher had to take a position at the middle level in the district or lose his/her job. Such cases always recall the wisdom of my mother's expression. So the question, what do we do for the principal who "inherits" a teacher who has no motivation to be at the middle level school and the transescent student who desperately needs teachers who understand his/her uniqueness at this developmental stage, is very pertinent. For this reason, staff development or in-service education must provide appropriate activities which will improve staff members' understanding of middle level realities. Motivation of staff and providing appropriate middle level instructional techniques for personnel involuntarily assigned to the middle level are real needs in the 1980's. Such staff development/in-service programs are absolutely essential if the middle level school is to succeed in responding to transescent learner needs in the years ahead. There are also, of course, the regular and continuing needs to improve further the skills of staff members who have achieved basic effectiveness with middle level youngsters.

In a very real sense, then, this chapter has essentially the same goals as those of the chapter preceding this one. The concern of both chapters is the provision of teachers who are well-prepared and can develop middle school programs which respond as effectively as possible to the educational needs of transescent youngsters. I agree with the many who have long felt that the widespread development of middle level teacher preparations will be necessary for the full establishment of effective middle level education. Such an achievement would reflect the broad understanding of the necessity to educate teachers uniquely prepared to work with transescent students. If parents, other laypersons, and our colleagues in teacher education truly understood the uniqueness of transescents, programs providing such specific education of middle level teachers would commonly exist now. However, we have not adequately communicated the differences in the educational needs of children during their approximate 10-14 years lifeframe from those of their elementary and high school years. Middle level educators must continue to work for the development of this understanding. Establishing a national perspective on transescence will lay the foundation for creating unique teacher preparation programs for middle level eduators.

I see, then, pre-service and in-service education as two components equally important for the education of professional middle level educators. The first will prepare a competent, beginning professional middle level educator. The second will help him/her refine existing skills and acquire and operationalize new information and skills. Staff development/in-service education offers a major means to help educators deal with the increasing knowledge explosion in areas important for middle level education.

Through staff development/in-service education activities, the teacher well-prepared in a strong pre-service program can gain experiences to refine his/her continued professional growth as a middle level educator.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT REALITIES

Before getting to substantive issues dealing with staff development/in-service education at the middle level, some general considerations are in order. Staff development and in-service education are terms from the theory and practice of curriculum planning. Although such activities are used in the administration and management of schools, these concepts are not managerial and require an understanding of those curriculum planning perspectives.

Definitions and Distinctions

Curriculum planning and development deals with the organization of the total program of the school. Any of a number of definitions of "curriculum" from the literature may be applied by the reader within this broad context. The development of curriculum as programs deals with objectives, content or subject matter, instructional activities, materials and measuring devices. As components of the teaching-learning situation, these elements are the proper concern of educators in curriculum planning activities. It is important that all such professional development activities *not* be construed as staff development/in-service activities in their specific relationship to curriculum planning. While today staff development and in-service activities are used to describe a broad range of professional growth programs, both terms were originally developed in the curriculum planning field and its literature. Krug (1951) and Saylor and Alexander (1954) describe that relationship among these components in the following way.

Curriculum planning is a macrocosm concerned with all activities used to improve instruction. This range includes the development of programs and the development or up-dating of skills necessary to implement those programs. In the curriculum field, staff development and in-service education refer to the specific means used to address development or up-dating of skills. Thus, staff development/in-service education is organized to help prepare educators for implementing the outcomes of curriculum planning activities. Those curriculum planning activities deal with the development or improvement of programs, courses, syllabi, curriculum guides, course outlines, resource units, teaching units or lesson plans. It is important, therefore, to understand that one *cannot* do curriculum planning through staff development/in-service activities. The needs for staff development/in-service activities are identified from the curriculum planning activities which develop new programs or improve existing ones. Staff development/in-service needs must be specified as those new or refined skills which educators must acquire or develop to implement successfully the new or revised program(s) in question. Thus, there is a mean-ends relationship between the development of new curricula and skills which educators seek to gain through staff development/in-service education activities. To organize staff development/in-service education programs without skill development purpose will only create meaningless activities for participants. Educators have too many personally identified skill improvement concerns to be frustrated with "busy work" not related to those needs.

Staff development and in-service education are largely interchangeable terms in the curriculum field. For "purists," staff development is properly used to describe the process and in-service refers to the specifics developed to improve the skills of participants involved in the activity(ies). However, staff development and in-service education will be used synonymously and interchangeably in this chapter.

Guidelines for Staff Development and In-Service Education

There are general guidelines for effective staff development/in-service programs which should be brought to the attention of middle level educators. The work of J. Cecil Parker (1957) continues to be very helpful. Parker's guidelines deal specifically with developing ownership by participants in the skills which the staff development/in-service program is designed to provide. To this end, the middle level school in-service planning group should represent the concerns of teachers, staff and all who will participate in those activities. Parker observed:

> The term 'guideline' is used here to represent an operational principle or a criterion which may consistently direct or guide individual and group action in planning, organizing, and conducting in-service activities.
>
> It is important that no 'sequential-step' significance be attached to the order in which the guidelines are presented. This is true for two reasons: First, it is impossible, as well as unsound, to derive useful guidelines that are mutually exclusive. This is to say, practically all of the actions indicated by these guidelines are involved when a group plans how to work. Second, no two individuals or groups should proceed with the actions indicated by the guidelines in an identical series of steps. (p. 103).

An entire faculty might be involved in a single staff development activity. However, it is more likely that such activities will be more appropriate for particular groups of participants all of whom are seeking to develop similar skills. Thus a number of different activities for different purposes could be held at the same time. In this way, responsive in-service activities can deal with group or individual needs. It is important to recognize that middle level school administrators, counselors, teachers and other staff members all have professional development needs in skill areas which could be accommodated through such activities. Parker's 12 guidelines which follow are very helpful in planning realistic and effective staff development/in-service activites.

Guideline I	People work as individuals and as members of groups on problems that are significant to them.
Guideline II	The same people who work on problems formulate goals and plan how they will work.
Guideline III	Many opportunities are developed for people to relate themselves to each other.
Guideline IV	Continuous attention is given to individual and to group problem-solving processes.
Guideline V	Atmosphere is created that is conducive to building mutual respect, support, permissiveness and creativeness.
Guideline VI	Multiple and rich resources are made available and used.
Guideline VII	The simplest possible means are developed to move through decisions to action.
Guideline VIII	Constant encouragement is present to test and to try ideas and plans in real situations.
Guideline IX	Appraisal is made an intergral part of in-service activities.
Guideline X	Continuous attention is given to the interrelationship of different groups.
Guideline XI	The facts of individual differences among members of each group are accepted and utilized.
Guideline XII	Activities are related to pertinent aspects of the current educational, cultural, political and economic scene. (pp. 127-128)

The importance of these guidelines in organizing activities to provide skills to middle level educators at both line and staff levels seems quite clear. Staff development activities should deal with skill needs identified by those who will be involved in implementing new or revised curricula and programs. Otherwise, the benefit to personnel will be minimal. It is a serious error to plan staff development activities without carefully involving those who will participate. (Those interested in further studying the impact of these guidelines will find the 1957 NSSE Yearbook a very helpful source.)

PERSISTENT MIDDLE LEVEL STAFF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Understanding Middle Level Realities

In his landmark address to the National Association of Secondary School Principals Conference at Las Vegas, Nevada in February, 1984, George Melton (1984) observed: "The primary requisite for being in middle level education is to like early adolescent kids, and be able to *stand* them even when we may not *understand* them" (p. 5). All educators do not like transescents to the point that they make working in middle schools their first choice. However, to be effective at the middle level, they need to understand transescent learners to the greatest degree possible. Such an understanding can cause educators to become more responsive to their tasks in middle level schools. Thus, the success of middle schools invariably pivots on this realization. Development of specific skills by line and staff personnel cannot begin until such an understanding exists.

The problems caused by the failure of the majority of pre-service programs to prepare administrators, counselors and teachers for the middle level cannot be overlooked. This issue is all the more important when elementary or secondary trained personnel are shifted to middle level school settings. Educators cannot realistically begin to consider or plan appropriate middle level programs or define skills necessary to implement them successfully unless the differences of transescent learners from their elementary and high school counterparts are clearly understood. When this understanding is achieved, educators are better able to consider the differences which middle level learning arrangements must provide for these youngsters. Staff development activities can then focus upon the skills which educators need to provide such differentiated educational programs at the middle level. Middle level in-service activities need to help educators deal with new data which suggest new skill approaches for dealing with middle level learners.

The planning of staff development programs ought to consider carefully the information presented by Donald Eichhorn in his chapter of this publication. The development of pedagogic skills for teaching transescents in middle level schools must be rooted in a solid understanding of that information. These data are foundational. This understanding is not complicated for educators who have been prepared for middle level school assignments; however, it is far more difficult for staff who are involuntarily assigned to middle schools. Dealing with the needs of these educators to become effective in their reassignments is important for staff morale. Educators who display high morale and are truly confident in their work are generally more effective and successful. Staff development should focus on minimizing differences in the degree of staff understanding of the unique needs of middle level learners. As involuntarily assigned staff come to understand this information, their perception of how they need to function differently with transescents from ways which were appropriate to their former school assignments will become clearer.

For instance, as a former high school advanced science teacher comes to understand the differences of middle level learners from mature high school adolescents, he/she can more readily see that he/she cannot effectively use high school teaching techniques in the middle school. The success of a middle school will improve as involuntarily assigned teachers understand that their effectiveness will depend on the degree to which they develop pedagogic skills based on the developmental differences of transescents from those of either elementary or high school learners. When one understands these differences, one can approach in-service education activities and define personal goals for skill development. As teachers involuntarily assigned to the middle level personally realize that their students now are neither "older elementary" nor "miniature high school" learners, specific areas essential to their professional skill development become more apparent.

Articulation Concerns

Achieving a realistic, middle level perspective among the educators in a newly reorganized middle school is a major concern for staff development. Articulation has long been a major middle level function. Gruhn (1947) applied this term to the tasks of transition from elementary to junior high and junior high to senior high in the 1940's.

Teachers from both the final year of a district's elementary schools and the entry year of the receiving middle level school need to work together in curriculum planning activities to articulate the district's elementary-middle level program. The same is true for teachers from the final year of the middle level schools and the entry year of the receiving high school to articulate the district's middle level-high school programs. The identification of a range of in-service education needs invariably comes from such interactions.

Staff assigned to middle level schools will benefit from activities designed to build their understanding of transescents. With an understanding of the uniqueness of middle level learners and their program needs, staff can better identify in-service experiences which will improve articulation of their particular middle level program. Teachers with child-centered and subject-based backgrounds are both essential to developing responsive middle level programs. Articulation with elementary school requires program options which build and phase from early childhood approaches. Youngsters entering the middle level school are making their transition from earlier stage of growth and development in a range of physiological, social, emotional and intellectual progressions. Likewise, maturing transescents who will soon matriculate to high school display a range of advanced behaviors dealing with their progress toward adolescence. Thus an effective middle level school program needs to orchestrate teaching strategies, skills and techniques which deal with the capacities of later childhood through beginning adolescence. Staff development activities can focus on developing skills helpful in organizing learning alternatives for each developmental level among differing groups of transescents within the middle school. The development of the skills necessary to maximize this is an important staff development objective.

Becoming A Unified, Middle Level School

Orchestrating the range of instructional skills just described raises an additional concern. Failure to develop this range of responsive skills through in-service education can lead to the following. In poorly organized middle level schools one can observe isolation of the 6th or 5th and 6th grade program from that of grades 7 and 8 in the same school building. In such situations, this isolation of program is no better than having a separate 6th or 5th and 6th grade "school" and a 7th and 8th grade "school" housed in one, single building.

This isolation of program components reflects a further lack of interaction among teachers in these grades. Personnel from the two separated strands do not, for the most part, interact either personally or professionally to any noticeable degree. More often than not, this has evolved from former elementary and secondary prepared teachers settling into the grades of the middle level program closest to either their elementary or secondary preparation. Such situations are also characterized by a virtual lack of curriculum planning and staff development activities.

In-service activities organized around program, content and developmental issues are essential to establishing a unified, middle school program in such situations. For example, one could bring together some elementary prepared teachers from the lower grades in the school to work with some former secondary prepared Language-Arts teachers assigned to the upper grades. Their in-service focus could be to identify the range of skills necessary to articulate the building's English-Reading sequence. This allows for the consideration of a range of perspectives and facilitates personal interaction among teachers in defining the skills necessary to offer a more articulated Language-Arts experience for students in the school. Similarly, some former secondary science teachers from the upper grades could be placed with some former elementary teachers to work on skills needed for the middle level science program. These kinds of activities allow teachers to articulate program, learn from each other, and learn to appreciate the skills and competencies of teachers with preparation and background different from their own. They also can come to recognize that the planning of effective middle level school requires the skills of teachers from a range of child-centered to subject-based backgrounds. The development of a unified, middle level school from isolated program strands requires both participatory curriculum planning and the organization of responsive staff development/in-service activities.

Teaming and House Plan Concerns

The teaming of teachers and the organization of staff into houses or schools-within-a-school has advantages beyond those in instruction and curriculum planning. Such arrangements may also facilitate the development of skills among staff who work closely together in such circumstances. The interaction among team members allows them to see and learn the strengths and weaknesses of their colleagues. Planning and collegial discussion of these realities can become a basis for defining personal as well as team staff development needs. Activities to meet those needs can also become very specific in such a setting. These arrangements make it easier to see that staff development need not be a common building-wide or departmental focus. While general in-service activities will continue to meet common needs, more specific needs in terms of the team or individual members on a team can be met in this more personalized setting. The skills acquired by team members can be assessed against their appropriateness for meeting the program goals developed by the team.

The school-within-a-school or house plan can organize in-service education needs which are intermediate to concerns at both the middle level school at-large and the teaming level. The houses are an intermediate level between the middle level school at-large and the specific needs of teachers working at the teaching-team level. The concerns of houses should deal with skill needs of staff in the range of programs and approaches unique to a particular house within the middle level school. House plans and school-within-a-school arrangements facilitate the development of alternatives to a singular school-wide organization and respond to the differing staff development needs of teachers in different houses.

Opportunities to consider staff development activities are more effectively utilized when groups of staff who work with common groups of learners in each of these organizational arrangements can interact regularly about the implications of program and progress by students. These arrangements serve to reduce the isolation of teachers from one another. In addition, this provides opportunities for staff to identify the strengths and weaknesses of colleagues and to gain similar feedback on their own needs. Such interaction can provide a means for on-going consideration of teacher skill needs as they work at implementing programs for transescents. The collegiality of this interaction further helps to build individual and collective ownership in those staff development activities which are organized in response to the awareness of skill needs of the individuals and groups. Staff development activities generated in this fashion tend to be more oriented to problem-solving activities to build specific skills rather than mere presentation of information on those skills. This also results in greater use of middle level school, house or team personnel as presentors in in-service activities. As staff members identify particular skills and strengths of their colleagues, these individuals can share their expertise to specific staff development needs. Programs organized in such a fashion have high implementation of the skills which have been developed through those activities.

PRINCIPLES IMPORTANT TO MIDDLE LEVEL IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

This final section offers some principles which are usually found in successful middle level in-service education programs. These principles should not be taken as any "recipe" or guarantee of instant success. They do, however, present perspectives which should not be overlooked in planning programs designed to improve skills of middle level educators.

Clarifying Short and Long-Range Concerns

The information considered in the earlier section "Definitions and Distinctions" is essential here. Staff development is an aspect of the total curriculum planning process and cannot be effective if considered outside of that context. As new or reorganized programs are planned and developed, both the short and long-range implications of skills necessary to implement these programs must be clearly defined. Decisions need to be made as to the immediate and longer term skill needs of educators to approach new curricula. A sequencing of these needs must also be the basis for establishing schedules to implement the new curricula. To implement a curricular program prematurely before educators develop essential skills will usually limit the program's success. A notable example of this was the fate of the core curriculum approach in many school districts.

In the mid 1950's, core was a popular middle level program. However, very few colleges or universities had pre-service programs which prepared teachers with the skills necessary to teach core, such as pupil-teacher planning, informal and formal correlation and fusion skills, and knowledge of the dynamics of instructional groups. The tasks for staff development of such teachers should have been clear. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of those districts which implemented core programs provided their teachers with those skills through in-service education. Most districts merely assigned teachers with multiple content backgrounds to core classes. Core programs staffed by teachers without these skills did not fare very well. In such districts the core program was eventually branded "another foolish and ineffective fad" and abolished.

The fault was not with core curriculum. The fault was in the naive and ridiculous notion that educators lacking the necessary skills were expected to teach the programs. The failure of core curriculum programs in such schools was, in reality, a staff development disaster. However, the failure of in-service preparation for core programs was never broadly recognized or discussed. Therefore the principle of clarifying short and long-range staff development/in-service education concerns is critical to the successful implementation of new curricula and programs.

Faculty Participation Needs

It is essential that faculty participate in decision-making about all aspects of staff development/in-service education. In a large measure, the success or failure of the middle level program will rise or fall on faculty enthusiasm. This involvement helps significantly in establishing faculty perceptions of the need for specific staff development activities. In cases where this involvement is omitted and staff developement/in-service activities are ordained by administrative fiat, the inevitable will occur. We all too frequently see teachers enter classrooms and continue to teach their "old ways" and not be able to utilize the skills the in-service activity sought to develop.

This occurs most frequently when the activity is organized with minimal or no involvement of faculty. First, teachers need opportunity to develop ownership in the need for the development of new skills. Second, they need opportunity to identify whether the new skill is either necessary, better than or as good as their present skills. If they do not develop personal motivation in approaching a staff development activity, their gain from the activity will be marginal when they subsequently attempt to implement the new program(s).

The time taken to establish such faculty involvement builds the key element of teacher understanding and ownership. Staff ownership in the activity is necessary because teachers are expected to implement new curricula with the skills they gain through the staff development/in-service activity. Faculty perspective that the program is "ours" rather than "theirs" will greatly enhance its chances of succeeding. Teachers will then also take the skill development activities far more personally and seriously. This confirms the importance of the principle of stressing faculty participation in planning middle level staff development activities.

Allowing Time for Change to Occur

Successful implementation of new programs can seldom be accomplished in less than three years. After the new or revised curriculum is planned, a realistic time-frame must be allowed for the planning and presentation of the essential in-service activities, and the piloting and refining of the new curricular programs. Failure to recognize the time needed for effective change is a critical error. More often than not, it will result in little more than surface changes in program structure and will not facilitate the altering of teacher attitudes about skills needed to improve middle level programs.

As was discussed earlier, middle level school staff are less specifically prepared for their learners than either elementary or high school teachers. For this reason, program changes and the development of teacher skills for those programs must be recognized as more difficult at the middle level. Therefore, providing adequate time for teachers to develop the skills necessary to program improvement is an important principle in planning improvement in the middle level program.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to discuss why staff development/in-service education at the middle level differs both in kind and degree from such needs at both the elementary and high school levels. Both the other levels are staffed by professionals educated in pre-service programs which focus on learner and program needs at those school levels. This is not the case with middle level education. The vast majority of professionals employed by either elementary or high schools have sought that level on a first choice basis. This also is not true of middle school educators. Elementary and high schools are supported by a tradition of pedagogy and public understanding clearly separated from each other. Middle level education has not achieved this widespread understanding among either our colleagues or the laity. Middle level education in general, and staff development/in-service education in particular, needs the publicizing of that reality among both populations.

The pre-service issue is fundamental to middle level education gaining parity with elementary and high schools in the three areas just considered. However, this will apparently take a long time to come to fruition in the majority of our states. The rhetoric of A NATION AT RISK and most of the other contemporary reports, commissions and panels on American secondary education appears to be further delaying this development. Therefore, the organization of staff development/in-service education programs which will provide middle level educators with needed skills must be given very high priority. Clearly, staff development/in-service education is the best opportunity presently available to prepare today's middle level educators with the skills and understandings essential to meet the needs which transescent learners bring to our nation's middle level schools. The success of the middle level education movement will depend heavily on the degree and intensity of our efforts to develop effective staff development/in-service programs.

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XIII

J. Howard Johnston

A Synthesis of Research Findings on Middle Level Education

In 1964, almost no one would have been very interested in what research said about middle schools, and there would not have been much to report. In 1974, I would have written that the yield of research on middle school education is essentially incomplete and inconclusive. But things have changed since then. In 1984, we are fortunate to have a growing body of useful research, and an increasing number of people who give serious research attention to the middle level of schooling. The result of the attention makes it impossible to summarize and critique all of the middle school research in a single chapter. So this chapter will attempt only to describe some of the findings from the last twenty years that seem to give us guidance on providing the best educational experience for young adolescents. The list is incomplete, and I have not done justice to all of the research conducted since 1964, but I hope this perspective will fuel additional interest and debate on the middle level school and its students as a credible and interesting research subject.

The earliest research efforts weren't very good. In 1975, Wiles and Thomason, after reviewing the substantial studies conducted between 1968 and 1974, concluded that research on middle schools was "of remarkably low quality." Most often, the research was conducted by someone who advocated some particular aspect of middle schooling, and used their "findings" to prove that they were correct. Furthermore, the investigators used only the name "middle school" to determine schools to be studied, not the presence or absence of specific practices that were especially relevant to the education of middle school youngsters. And, finally, the researchers frequently ignored variables that were likely to affect the way the school operated: how long it had been in operation, the length of time the students had been in the school, the sociological aspects of the community, and so on.

Fortunately, though, we have come far in the past decade or two. Research on and about the middle level school has begun to proliferate. More important, middle level educators have begun to look outside of "middle school research" *per se* to find information that is useful in making professional decisions that enhance the educational program for young adolescents.

The following list of findings are those I believe to be most significant. It doesn't include much from the large bodies of research literature in special education, counseling, or other important fields. Instead, I have focussed on the research which is most relevant for the teaching-learning process as it is conducted in most schools and as it relates to the expectations the American public has for its educational system in general and its middle level schools in particular.

1. The grade level configuration of the middle level school appears to be inconsequential in its effects on student learning, school adjustment, and personal growth.

The earliest research studies tended to focus on "proving" that one plan of organization, junior high or middle school, was superior to the other. It didn't. In fact, Tom Gatewood's (1972) strong review of literature on the subject of differences between middle schools and junior high schools suggested that further inquiry into the subject might not be profitable. The investigations continued, however, and the ten year period between 1974 and 1984 has produced additional studies which attempt to demonstrate that one organizational method is superior to the other.

As late as 1983, Calhoun, after reviewing all available comparative studies, concluded:

> ...There is little difference in academic achievement between middle and junior high pupils;
>
> ...grade organization has no apparent effect on the organizational climate of the schools;
>
> ...maturation studies show that 9th graders are more like 10th graders and 8th graders are more like 7th graders;
>
> ...the quality of the school program is more important than the grade level organization;
>
> ...junior highs and middle schools appear to be more alike than different, and from an empirical perspective they seem to differ, systematically, in name only.

Other studies have confirmed the same things. Draud (1979) found no major differences between the two kinds of schools on school climate variables; others have concluded that school organization, *per se,* has little effect on teacher performance, student learning, student attitude, delinquency, truancy, organizational behavior, curriculum design, school adjustment behavior...virtually anything that is of any interest to school professionals (Johnston and Markle, 1983).

Grade organization in and of itself doesn't seem to make any difference. This simple generalization, on the basis of research, can be made with confidence. And with a decisivness that is rare in research, I submit that we know all of any consequence that there is to know about the differences between schools that are named "middle schools" and those that are named "junior high schools." There is little point in trying to show that one plan is better than another. We know it isn't. To put this conclusion into immediate use, in the remainder of this chapter, I will refer to schools for young adolescents as "middle level schools," and in so doing will mean any of the numerous organizational plans that exist.

2. The proper focus for middle level education begins with specific attention to the needs of the client.

The beginning of mature middle level research is marked with Don Eichhorn's (1966) classic studies of growth and development and their implications for middle level curriculum and instruction. Of course, human development had been studied for hundreds of years, and curriculum plans had been proposed to accommodate the developmental phase students were assumed to be in. Unfortunately, developmental psychologists rarely proposed curriculum designs, and curriculum developers rarely had the necessary background in developmental psychology to make the subtle but necessary adjustments to the curriculum specified by the changes in the human being.

Eichhorn is among the first to study the development of the young adolescent with an eye toward the kind of curriculum mandated by his or her growth. His work marks an early effort to achieve a client-centered curriculum — one that is based on the biological and social development of the student rather than just a philosophical position regarding the desired outcomes of schooling and the resulting design for the curriculum.

The findings of his studies show the unique developmental stresses placed on young adolescents, and document dramatically the enormous diversity found in "normal" development among children between the ages of 10 and 14. His work laid the foundation for all developmentally based curriculum at the middle school level that was to follow.

3. Research on young adolescent thinking and problem solving suggests an active, inquiry based curriculum.

Beyond the attention to growth and development best exemplified by Eichhorn's work, recent attention has been brought to other aspects of the student as learner. Chief among these areas of inquiry are studies that focus on adolescent thinking and problem solving.

In a study directed specifically at the 11-14 year old student, Strahan (1980) studied the thinking strategies employed by early adolescents who were in a transition phase between concrete and formal operational thinking. Observing these students as they solved 55 specially-constructed problems and following the problem-solving sessions with interviews of the subjects led Strahan to conclude that these youngsters employed four major kinds of thinking strategies for solving problems:

1. Visualization: students created mental pictures of possible solutions.
2. Experimentation: students tested hypotheses and "tried out" various solutions.
3. Abstraction: students formed generalizations, synthesized concepts, and eliminated factors that did not apply.
4. Extension: students applied strategies from previously solved problems to other circumstances and problems.

Perhaps most important, Strahan reported that all students used all strategies with varying degrees of sophistication and comfort. However, all students demonstrated incomplete mastery of the methods. He says, "in essence, the students were trying out new modes of thinking, experimenting with new powers of analysis and excited by the prospects of discovering solutions."

In addition to the obvious conclusion that schools should provide students with practice in various ways of solving problems in order to enhance problem-solving behavior and skill, he suggests that teachers also engage students in discussions about the kinds of thinking strategies they employ on any given problem. The focus should be not just on what the solution to the problem is, but how they had to think about the problem to arrive at that solution.

A recent review of research literature (Johnston and Markle, 1981) reveals a number of findings about problem-solving and productive thinking. First, the quality and amount of thinking involved in the solution of a problem is dependent upon the way business is transacted in the classroom. Cooperative classrooms in which students are encouraged to express ideas contribute to problem-solving behavior and productive thinking. Students who cooperate with one another on the solution of a problem are more likely to develop effective problem-solving skills and strategies than students who work independently or who compete with one another.

who work independently or who compete with one another.

Especially important is for the teacher to foster the development of an accepting attitude in the classroom — one which values novel ideas and unusual insights. Experimentation has shown that students will increase their use of uncommon responses when they are encouraged to do so.

Consistent with Strahan's findings, this survey also pointed to the necessity for students to discuss with the teacher and each other the problem solving strategies they used. Included in this discussion must be attention to the way in which they incorporated new knowledge into the solution to the problem, and how they avoided evident or subtle "traps" that could have led to an incorrect or dysfunctional solution.

4. Student attitude is of vital importance in learning, and that attitude can be altered and modified.

Attitude has been subject to increasing scrutiny during the past decade, and this work has shed new light on the adolescent learner.

Most important is the notion that attitude is related to long-term learning. While there is not a very strong relation between a student's attitude toward a subject and his or her achievement in it, there is a defensible relationship between a student's attitude and his or her subsequent behavior toward the subject (or attitude object). Thus, a student who dislikes math may not do poorly on math tests, but he is likely to avoid math and math related study in the future. Furthermore, students with positive attitudes toward a subject have a greater tendency to use what they have learned later in their lives (Mager, 1968). Thus, as school is preparation for life, the development of positive attitudes toward school subjects and learning is as important as the transmittal of information and the development of skills.

Attitude development can be enhanced by four types of approaches (Johnston and Markle, 1979). Classical conditioning involves the pairing of an initially neutral object (such as math) with an object that elicits a positive reaction (such as conversation with one's peers). So, if a math teacher wants to improve student attitudes toward his subject, he might do so by having the students work together on the solution of problems and tasks. Care must be exercised, though, because classical conditioning works in reverse as well. By pairing a neutral object with a negative one, the teacher can foster the development of negative attitudes toward the neutral object. A student embarrassed by group showers, for example, might learn to despise physical education — or, worse yet, physical activity in general.

Among the middle level teacher's primary responsibilities is sensitivity to the attitude learning that is going on in the classroom, and the planning of experiences that foster the growth of positive attitudes.

A second approach is based on operant learning theory, the assumption that behavior (and attitude) is controlled by its consequences. Accordingly, students are more likely to develop attitudes that result in positive reinforcement than they are to develop attitudes which result in punishment.

First, the teacher must recognize the manifestation of a desirable attitude when it occurs: helpfulness, diligence in getting assignments in on time, and so on. Next, the teacher must reward the attitude (and its related behavior) with something the student thinks is important. For the most part, students prefer personal recognition to tangible prizes (Ware, 1978). Finally, the teacher must be attentive to the presence of the attitude and, initially, reinforce it each time it is uttered or displayed. Later, the reinforcements can be gradually withdrawn. One good example is found in an anecdote. A student who was habitually truant came to school late and was scolded for being tardy. He solved the problem of lateness nicely. He stopped coming altogether. A better approach would have been to reward the student for coming at all. Tardiness could be worked on later.

A third approach to the change of attitudes is derived from social learning theory and is called "modeling." In this case, the student is likely to imitate the attitude professed by a significant person. More specifically, students will imitate the attitude of models who have prestige in the eyes of the students, and who model attitudes that result in reinforcement rather than punishment. It is important that teachers model proper attitudes toward the subject (enthusiasm, interest, joy) and avoid attitudes that are counterproductive (boredom, tedium, detachment). It is also important for teachers to influence the attitudes of peer leaders, for they often provide the models the rest of the class will emulate.

Finally, attitudes can be changed by dissonance. Because individuals strive for consistency among beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behavior, awareness of inconsistencies will often result in a change that will restore equilibrium ... and the easiest thing to change is opinion, belief and attitude. If a student who dislikes science (and puts little effort into it) becomes convinced that the salvation of mankind depends on the increased acquisition of scientific knowledge, he may change his behavior to the extent that he devotes more effort to science. Of course, a model (such as mentioned above) might be instrumental in changing that attitude, but other methods work as well.

First, a teacher can use a respected source to present information that is convincing but inconsistent with exiting beliefs. The resulting conflict may result in a desired attitude change. Second, a teacher may have students role play a situation that requires behavior which is inconsistent with their prevailing attitude. Once they have behaved in a way inconsistent with their attitude, they may change the attitude in order to avoid the dissonance of position with which they disagree. Again, the dissonance created by defending the position may result in an alteration of the current attitude in the desired direction.

5. Research on the brain and its functions provides evidence for varying the nature of the intellectual tasks performed by students in the middle level school setting.

Among the most controversial of the research areas focussing on the learner is that dealing with brain physiology, brain growth, and brain functioning. It is, at the same time, the most promising research area since it relates to thinking, human development, and instructional planning.

The work of Epstein (1974), 1977) and Epstein and Toepfer (1978) presents evidence that the brain grows in a series of identifiable, predictable spurts, and that these spurts are linked to specific capacities for mental operation. Of interest to middle level educators is their argument for the curriculuar implications of such growth. They say that periods of slow brain growth, two of which occur during the age spans normally associated with middle level students, are times during which new thinking competencies cannot be introduced with any measure of success, and that middle level curricula should be designed to allow students an opportunity to practice and mature the skills they already have.

Most important, though, is the extent to which Toepfer and Epstein relate brain growth to other aspects of schooling — notably the "turn off, drop out" syndrome. They argue that a student who is frustrated by being required to think in ways that are physiologically impossible may turn off from school and never catch up with agemates again. In general, Toepfer says, the school curriculum over-estimates the number of students who are capable of formal operations and abstract thinking. That, he concludes, is one of the largest sources of frustation, anxiety and stress for middle grade youngsters.

In recent years, several schools which have experimented with a cognitive matching curriculum have begun to report on the academic achievement and school adjustment of their students. While preliminary, the results of these studies are encouraging, and suggest that attention to brain development and related cognitive skills is productive in increasing student learning. (See, for instance, Brooks, M., Fusco, E., and Grennon, J. 1983).

We have also found that the two halves of the brain handle information quite differently (Bogen, 1977 and Sperry, 1968). The left hemisphere tends to specialize in "propositional, analytic-sequential, time-oriented serial organization well suited to remembering verbal information." The right hemisphere "specializes in the appositional, synthetic-gestalt organization well adapted processing information in which the parts acquire meaning through their relationships with the other parts." Because there is considerable overlap between the functions and capabilities of the two hemispheres, the hypothesis provided for the applied researcher is that learning is enhanced when information is presented is such a way as to involve both hemispheres in its processing (Wittrock, 1978). Teaching methods that enhance verbal information with pictorial or other imagistic stimuli enhance memory among normal learners and those with left brain damage.

Research related to brain functioning is that conducted around the subject of cognitive style. Preliminary findings indicate that learning can be difficult when a mismatch is present between the child's cognitive style and the organization of the curriculum. (Zelnicker and Jeffrey, 1976). Cohen, (1969) hypothesizes that it is actually these cognitive style differences that produce achievement differences between children from various cultural backgrounds.

Finally, and among the most significant findings are those which point to the brain as an active "model-builder" (Jerison, 1977). It actively builds models of the world by selecting, transforming and organizing information for memory storage (Luria, 1973 and Trevarthen, 1974). Learners , we may infer, are not passive recipients of information, but actually construct their own meanings out of the material they encounter (Wittrock, 1978).

Clearly, research on brain functions and learning is important to educators. However, it is equally important that school professionals not wait for "definitive answers;" they are seldom forthcoming from research and one should be suspicious of them when they do appear. Instead, we should act on the basis of what is known — that diverse learning styles, differential brain development, and dominance in hemisphericity mandate a varied approach to instruction, an approach that makes use of as many different intellectual activities and information processing strategies as possible. We have long suspected that the same lesson won't work for all middle level youngsters; now we know why.

6. Schools are, essentially, social systems, and the nature of that system has a profound effect on learning.

The importance of the peer group is legendary among those who work with young adolescents. But we often tend to focus on the negative aspects of conformity to peer expectations, rather than upon the ways in which that conformity can be used to enhance school learning.

A review of relevant studies (Johnston, Markle and Stingley, 1982) showed that peer acceptance is largely related to academic achievement. High status students have their academic achievement consistently over-estimated by their peers, while the reverse is true for low-status students.

More important, though, many early adolescent students prefer peers to adults as sources of validation of their skills, ability and general acceptability. This suggests that teachers can enhance a student's willingness to participate in academic tasks by arranging for the student to perform well at a task that is judged by peers. Unfortunately, most teachers seem to be poor estimators of any given student's acceptability by the peer group, so students are often put in situations which require performance that is inconsistent with their status in the group. To illustrate the way the teacher's ability to estimate status declines, kindergarten teachers estimated student status with nearly 63% accuracy; seventh grade teachers estimated it with only 25% accuracy (Moreno).

It is also evident that structured peer contact increases problem-solving thinking and reduces incidents of truancy and disruption. Members of groups who had regular contact with peer leaders (in work groups or informally), or who were involved in group counseling sessions with peer leaders, showed fewer absences, less tardiness and generally better behavior. On the other hand, the second most frequently offered reason for truant behavior was "peer phobia," an unremitting anxiety over encounters with peers.

Teachers may be instrumental in affecting the composition of the peer group by giving signals about the acceptability of a given student. Signals about their achievement or ability to be a "member" of the class will affect students' status with the group. Teacher comments like, "We'll all wait for Robert to figure out the answer" suggest that Robert is somehow different from the rest of us — and, among young adolescents, to be different is disaster.

Other group dynamics prevail in the classroom as well. Many of them are created by the teacher, but often without much forethought. However, the empirical connections between group constitution and operation and student achievement are clear (Johnston and Markle, 1980).

Group norms are the "shared expectations or attitudes about what are appropriate procedures and behaviors" (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975). They are established by the group to maintain behavioral consistency (Shaw, 1971). Group norms that are narrow and specific increase the chance that a student will run afoul of the group's expectations and be excluded. In groups where the range of tolerable behavior is broad, there is a tone of mutual support and encouragement, and student anxiety is reduced. For this reason, rules that are seen as narrow, petty and very specific are unlikely to become group norms for the students.

These norms are significant, because if the classroom rules are also the group's norms, the teacher needs to intervene very little in the enforcement of the rules. For the most part, the group itself will seek conforming behavior from its members. For young adolescents, one of the most powerful motivators of behavior is striving for consistency between the group's norms and individual behavior.

Related to norms are group expectations: predictions about how an individual will act in a given situation. If everyone in the group assumes that Marvin will fail the math test because he always fails the math test, chances are good that Marvin will fail. In fact, he will probably fail even if he can do the work, although it is more likely that he will simply avoid studying in order to live up to (or down to) the group's expectation. Teachers must be especially sensitive to the expectations they communicate about individual students, for they are powerful factors in the group's formation of expectations for its individual members.

Finally, group cohesiveness is of special significance in group relations...and it is a two-edged sword. While cohesive groups tend to be more productive, they also tend to resist outside influence, taking, instead, their support from inside the group itself. For this reason, it is important that highly cohesive groups not perceive outside influence to be capricious or at odds with the norms of the group.

Teachers can contribute to group cohesiveness by arranging for cooperative experiences and minimizing competition among group members. Fowler (1979) and his colleagues offer suggestions for enhancing group cohesiveness: conduct discussions to identify clear, mutually understood goals for the class; make deliberate efforts to support and accept each student and encourage the empathy of the group; share the leadership function (decision making) with the students at appropriate times; focus attention on the group by having students actively listen to each other; and use "we" and "us" statements instead of "I" and "me" statements. Group cohesiveness is discouraged when the teacher reprimands the wrong student, stops a less serious deviency from group norms when a more serious one is taking place, hesitates to stop misbehavior, or gives excessive, public rewards to individual students.

Groups are among the most powerful influences on learning. Given proper attention, they can facilitate learning. Inattention to group dynamics, on the other hand, invites student failure and teacher frustration.

One special group is the ability group. Much has been said and written about it, but the practice IS NOT SUPPORTED BY RESEARCH (Johnston and Markle, 1983). Instructional procedures tend to suffer when homogenous groups are used because teachers feel that the grouping has taken care of individual differences and reduces the need for additional individualization within the group. Expectations tend to be higher for the perceived "higher" ability groups, with the focus being on what the students are able to do; the opposite conditions prevail for the "lower" groups.

Ironically, teachers tend to believe that ability grouping works well. The large bulk of evidence suggests otherwise. In fact, the research evidence available suggests that grouping by ability has a deleterious effect on instructional effectiveness, student self-esteem, the ability of students to learn from one another, student attitude toward the subject in which the grouping takes place, the academic performance of lower ability students, and racial balance in the classroom. There is not much to be said in its favor.

7. Time is related to student achievement, but in ways that are more complex and subtle than originally suspected.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education recommended that the United States adopt a school calendar that devotes 220 days to schooling. If more time is available, conventional wisdom dictates, more learning will take place. Unfortunately, that conclusion results more from conviction than from evidence.

In order to properly evaluate the role of time in school achievement, it is important to distinguish at least three kinds of time: allocated, engaged, and academic (Evertson, 1980.) Allocated time is that amount given to academic pursuits — the amount scheduled for instruction in the subject areas.

Several categories of variance are important in the study of allocated time (Karweit, 1982). First, there are discrepancies between the number of scheduled school days (ranging from 175 to 184 with an average of 179) and the number of days school is actually in session. Weather, strikes, funding shortfalls, and fuel shortages have all contributed to a reduction in the number of days school is actually in session. Second, student absenteeism further reduces the amount of school time available for instruction. Is some urban areas, absence rates of 40-50% are not uncommon. And this presents a twofold problem: not only are those students out of contact with instruction during their absence, additional time is lost for the entire class when the teacher tries to bring returning students into the mainstream of class activity. Finally, teacher absences reduce the amount of time that school is "in session." The class time spent with a substitute teacher generally does not advance students through the planned course of instruction as efficiently as when the time is managed by the student's principal teacher.

Surprisingly, the amount of time that students are exposed to scheduled instruction seems to have a relatively small influence on learning and achievement. While it is reasonable to suspect some loss of learning progress as a result of school closings, strikes and high absence rates, these time-related variables have not been conclusively linked to student achievement. Ironically, it is the enhancement of this kind of time — allocated time — that has received the most attention from educational policy makers. Manipulating allocated time, though, promises the least improvement in learning and achievement.

Assuming that school is in session, how much time is spent on instruction? The variance in this facet of allocated time is as great, if not greater, than the variability in the amount of time school is in session.

The actual length of the school day seems to have little impact on learning and achievement (Karweit, 1982). More important is the amount of time devoted to any given subject.

Within a fifth grader's normal six hour day, one study found that about four hours was actually scheduled for instruction in academic subjects. Of these four, approximately three and devoted to "core" academic subjects, with the other hour being spent in art, music and physical education (Rosenshine, 1980).

Within this schedule, however, teachers have considerable latitude to spend more time on some topics and less on others. In one school, the amount of math instruction ranged from two hours and fifty minutes per week in one classroom to five hours and fifty minutes per week in another — a net difference of over 100 hours per year in the amount of math instruction given the two groups! (Karweit and Slavin, 1981). Smith (1977) found that the content of the curriculum varies substantially with the teacher's opinion of what's important. Cahen and Fisher (1978) document as much as a seven-fold difference in time expended on special content topics, depending upon the preferences of the teachers.

How much time is used for instruction? Conant (1973) said that 92 out of 300 minutes per day were used for instruction. Park found that 21 to 69 percent of the school day was used for teaching, while, conversely, Cusick reported that nearly 200 minutes of the school day is spent on procedural and maintenance tasks. He continues, "the time spent actively engaged with some teacher over a matter of cognitive importance may not exceed twenty minutes a period for five periods a day. This is a high estimate. I would say that if an average student spent an hour to one-and-a-half hours involved on subject matter — that was a good day." (Cusick, 1973:56).

Frederick (1977) found that interruptions, procedural activities and the like are very disruptive and consume an inordinate amount of time. Moreover, Cusick reported that lower achieving students were more likely to participate in these non-academic uses of time than are high achieving classes.

Cusick's use of the word "engaged" speaks to another issue. Despite the amount of time allocated to instruction, it is of little consequence unless the time is used for instruction *and* the students are engaged — actively and substantially — in the instruction presented to them. This requires that instruction be presented and that students pay attention to it.

A number of studies (BTES, 1978; Karweit and Slavin, 1981; Good and Beckerman, 1978) report that students normally attend to instruction between 66 and 78 percent of the time. Tremendous variations do occur in attention and these can probably be attributed to student differences, instructional methods used, time of day and week, and so on. However, there is very little study of which set of variables seems to influence attention to the greatest degree. This is surprising because student attention and the teacher's ability to manipulate it is central to teaching and learning.

Academic learning time is the amount of time that a student is engaged in cognitive activity of a kind that will be of intellectual benefit to him or her. Students might be engaged in an activity (a spelling bee, for example) which is appealing because of its game-like nature. However, it is possible that the contest will be of no benefit to a large number of students — those who know all of the words and those who know none of them and are, thereby, able to participate for only a few moments (until they misspell their first word).

Numerous practices have been employed to reduce the effect of the diversity found in classrooms. For the most part, they are not particularly successful. The message is quite clear: the most useful time is that spent interacting with the teacher. Rosenshine (1980) found that the engagement rate of students working on unsupervised seatwork was about 70 percent while the rate for students interacting with the teacher (in a teacher-led discussion) was about 84%. This canot be construed as an argument for using only whole group instruction, though. If the seatwork is used to keep students on task while the teacher works with a smaller subgroup of students, the relative lack of engagement in seatwork may be offset by superior individualized instruction in the small group. If, on the other hand, the seatwork is trivial or at a level inappropriate for the students' ability, it is probably not justified as an alternative to whole-group instruction.

A second order message may appear here. It seems as if any interactive method provides greater engagement rates than any passive or isolated method (i.e. seatwork.) Fisher and his colleagues (1980) found that engagement rates varied from 50 to 90 percent, and the higher rates were in classes with the greatest amount of interaction. This suggests that interaction around an academic task, whether it is teacher-led or conducted in a monitored student group, is a productive way of maximizing student engagement rates.

What are we to conclude from all of this? The best summary is probably that provided by Nancy Karweit (1984). It presents a tempered view of time on task and related research — a view that is particularly appropriate for the middle level educator.

Studies of the way time is used in schools have established that:

-Only about half the time in the school day is used for instruction.

-There are great differences in the amounts of time students are exposed to learning activities.

-Time allocations differ markedly among classrooms.

-Many sources determine how time is used in schools.

In general, research studies show a positive association between time and learning, but differences in achievement are not consistently explained by differences in the amount of instructional time. In many studies, the proportion of variance in achievement uniquely attributable to time varies from 1 to 15 percent." (Karweit, 1984)

However, this does not suggest that educators should not be attentive to time and how it is used in classrooms. Clearly there is a relationship between time and learning, and, given the number of variables that do affect learning, finding one which accounts for as much as 15 percent of the variation in achievement is no mean feat. Instead of undervaluing the strength of the association between time and achievement, it is more useful to study the components of high quality learning time — the kind of time that is strongly related to maximum student engagement and improved student achievement.

8. Teacher behavior is a significant event in the lives of students and a major determinant of the quality of the educational experience.

The very best middle level teachers — those that produce impressive achievement results, have fewer management and discipline problems and imbue students with a sense of intellectual curiosity — seem to behave in similar ways. In addition, they share a set of personal attributes that can be observed and, we hope, fostered in other teachers. There are, of course, exceptions to every rule: the much beloved Mrs. B., whose sharp tongue and dour visage should have alienated her from all of us in the 8th grade, but who, for some reason, is remembered fondly by almost all of us who labored under her lash. But, in the main, good middle level teachers demonstrate behavioral patterns and personal qualities that have been uncovered by research. The extent to which these findings provide a prescription for how teachers should act is doubtful. More likely, it is a description of how the best ones do act. That, in itself, should be instructive.

Effective middle level teachers demonstrate a number of distinctive personal traits. First and foremost, they have positive self concepts (Aspy and Buhler; Combs, et. al., 1974; Edeburn and Landry; Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1985). They feel adequate, identify with others, and see themselves as worthwhile and likeable. They needn't be the center of attention, and they can be genuinely congratulatory. Further, they can give up "control" to students when conditions merit it.

Effective teachers are also warm and empathic. They seek contact with students, use affectionate words and look pleasant. Teachers who like students (and show it) tend to have students who like each other. Even more important, though, the very best teachers can put themselves "in their students' places," and develop a deep, personal understanding of the events in their students' lives and how those events affect learning. (Gage, 1972; Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975).

Good middle level teachers are enthusiastic, optimistic and spontaneous (Rosenshine, 1976; Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975). They express positive attitudes toward students and what their students can achieve. As a result, they are vigorous in their presentations to the class, and avoid reading to the class from prepared statements. In other words, they are spontaneous — they can capitalize on unexpected incidents and encourage student expression, even if it takes them from their planned activity. Because they are flexible, they can change the focus in the midst of a lesson if students become bored or disinterested and they adjust easily to changes in routine. They also tend to respond favorably to student proposals for changes in the class's procedures.

A final personal trait is that the best teachers accept students. (Rosenshine and Furst, n. d.). They avoid criticism and use frequent, sincere statements of approval. Good teachers avoid belittling students in front of peers, and they do not state negative opinions about students publically.

The very best teachers are also knowledgeable. They are aware of the developmental characteristics of their pupils, and know what constitutes "normal" behavior for any given age group (Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975). They are disinclined to push students into activities for which they are not ready, and they are seldom bewildered over a student's inability to perform a given task.

The good teachers are also knowledgeable in their subject area(s) (Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975). They are able to structure instruction around major concepts in the discipline and model the kind of thinking and analysis used in the subject. They can alter instruction based on student needs, but still preserve the essential conceptual base of the instructional material. Most important, they are able to monitor student learning, quickly correcting mistakes and misperceptions, and engage students in significant intellectual activity around important concepts and skills.

Good middle level teachers are also skillful. They use a variety of instructional activities and materials to vary instruction in accordance with student abilities and learning styles (McDonald; Rosenshine and Furst, n. d.). To this end, they diagnose individual learning needs and prescribe individual instruction (Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975). They monitor the completion of learning tasks, perceive various learning rates and compensate for them in the planning of class activities. They tend to define their expectations on an individual basis, and permit groups of differing sizes and formation criteria to work together. They show less tendency to teach the entire class a single lesson or to grade on a group standard.

These teachers encourage student thinking by asking varied questions, using both higher and lower order types in appropriate situations. They are also indirect, using student statements to build the class agenda, encouraging student talk, discreetly praising students, and minimizing criticism and confusion. (Gage, 1972; Gall and Joyce, 1976; Rosenshine, 1976; Soar; Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975).

In structuring instruction, good teachers spend time explaining content in organized ways so that students can make conceptual links with other learning. They tend to review previous lessons, outline the main topics of planned lessons, signaling the beginning and ending of lessons and underscoring important points. These teachers are less likely to begin lessons without organizing them, change activities abruptly, or begin new topics without summarizing previous ones. (McDonald; Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975).

Concrete materials and learning experiences are used in the most effective teachers' classrooms. The best teachers use models, objects, and visual aids to provoke imagery, and they focus student attention on the task at hand, giving clear, concrete directions and specifications for completion of learning tasks (Goode and Biddle, 1975). And while students are engaged in learning tasks, effective teachers monitor their performance and give corrective feedback. Seatwork is always supervised, and the tasks are not treated as trivial or beneath the teacher's attention. (Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975).

Finally, the most effective teachers actively listen to their students. They build on student thoughts and expressions in the lesson, and they acknowledge what students say by summarizing or paraphrasing what was said. Above all, they avoid the appearance of being bored or preoccupied when a student is talking. (Aspy and Buhler; Tikunoff, Berliner and Rist, 1975).

The image that emerges is a self-confident, personable professional who is aware of and skilled at meeting student needs. This effective teacher stimulates significant intellectual activity, and uses a variety of instructional techniques. Most important, these activities are matched to the abilities of his or her students.

9. Effective schools share certain characteristics that may be replicated in other school settings, but with uncertain success.

At first glance, the research on effective schools seems to comprise a formidable host. Among the most important works are those of Brookover, et al., (1979, 1983), Denham and Lieberman (1980), Edmonds (1979a, 1979b, 1981, 1978), Purkey and Smith (1982), Rutter, et al. (1979), and Vanezky (1979). But common to many of these studies are problems which reduce the generalizability of their findings, and suggest that the yield of school effectiveness research may not be as conclusive as we might have thought it to be.

Purkey and Smith (1982) reported that many of the studies used different designs, methods and measures of effectiveness. This reduces the opportunity to compare findings across studies, a procedure that would be of great value because of the limited number of schools included in most of the research studies undertaken. Furthermore, the studies seemed to rely on a "highly circumscribed, quantitative measures of school improvement based on basic skills acquisition" measured by "recording annual increases in proportionate mastery in the lowest social class" (Edmonds, 1981). Gertsten (1982) and Neufeld (1983) added that the amount of redesign effort that effective schools research has spawned well exceeds the dimensions of the original research, most of which focussed on reading and mathematics achievement exclusively.

Despite these difficulties, the large body of conclusions that stem from the school effectiveness studies deserve careful attention. While they are not clear-cut, sometimes conflict, and are not mutually exclusive there are many consensus constructs which do give a sense of direction, but not a recipe.

With that cautionary note, one of the most comprehensive listings of effectiveness attributes is presented by Mackenzie (1983). He presents the findings on three dimensions: Leadership Dimensions, Efficacy Dimensions, and Efficiency Dimensions. He divides them further into two subcategories — "core elements" and "facilitating elements." Core elements are mentioned frequently in the literature; facilitating elements may be read as specific conditions that make it easier to implement the core conditions of effective schooling.

1. Leadership dimensions
    A. Core Elements
        1. Positive climate and overall atmosphere
        2. Goal-focussed activities toward clear, attainable and relevant objectives
        3. Teacher directed classroom management and decision-making
        4. Inservice staff training for effective teaching.
    B. Facilitating Elements
        1. Shared consensus on values and goals
        2. Long-range planning and coordination
        3. Stability and continuity of key staff
        4. District-level support for school improvement.

II. Efficacy Dimensions
    A. Core Elements
        1. High and positive achievement expectations with a constant press for excellence
        2. Visible rewards for academic excellence and growth
        3. Cooperative activity and group interaction in the classroom
        4. Total staff involvement with school improvement
        5. Autonomy and flexibility to implement adaptive processes
        6. Appropriate levels of difficulty for learning tasks
        7. Teacher empathy, rapport, and personal interaction with students.
    B. Facilitating Elements.
        1. Emphasis on homework and study
        2. Positive accountability: acceptance of responsibility for learning outcomes
        3. Strategies to avoid nonpromotion of students
        4. Deemphasis of strict ability grouping; interaction with more accomplished peers.
III. Efficiency Dimensions
    A. Core Elements
        1. Effective use of instructional time; amount and intensity of engagement in school learning
        2. Orderly and disciplined school and classroom environments
        3. Continuous diagnosis, evaluation and feedback
        4. Well-structured classroom activities
        5. Instruction guided by content coverage
        6. Schoolwide emphasis on basic and higher order skills.
    B. Facilitating Elements
        1. Opportunities for individualized work
        2. Number and variety of opportunities to learn.

By his own admission, Mackenzie's groupings may be arbitrary, but they do provide a comprehensive listing of the elements identified in the effective schools literature. A widely distributed listing is found in Joyce, Hersh and McKibbin (1983). Their thirteen characteristics are grouped into two categories: Social Organization and Instruction and Curriculum.

The social organization category recognizes that schools are essentially social settings which are organized for a specific purpose: teaching and learning. To a large extent, the ability of the school to fulfill its function is dependent upon the quality of the social organization which pervades the building. Because the social organization of the school determines its mores, customs and "rules," effective schools have social climates which foster academic excellence. Clear academic and social behavior goals, order and discipline, high expectations, and pervasive caring are among characteristics included in the social organization category. High academic learning time, monitored homework, and opportunities for student responsibility are features of the academic program of effective schools on this list. (The list is quoted in full in Johnston, Markle, and Ramos de Perez, *Middle School Journal,* August, 1984, pp. 9-10).

My own investigations (1984), undertaken using naturalistic methods to study the academic culture of effective middle level schools, and those of Lipsitz (1983) confirm the presence of such characteristics in middle level schools as well. It is important, though, that we recognize that these characteristics appear in schools which *are* effective; they are not necessarily the elements that *make* the school an effective one. The message in this conclusion is that one cannot install a school effectiveness program. Effective schools emerge from a complex set of cultural and social factors that focus attention on academic performance, support academic growth in a manner consistent with the developmental stage of the youngster, and build an intellectual community that rewards and reinforces academic pursuits in its public rituals and in its private interactions. It is the creation of this culture, not the installation of the major characteristics of effective schools that will enhance student learning and produce long-term school improvement.

Many important topics such as self-concept, curriculum planning and testing are not included in this synthesis. The extent of relevant research is such that effective middle level educators need to be continuing students themselves. Middle level educators can no longer claim that research provides no guidelines for developing excellent programs for middle level youngsters.

No one else's list of important research findings can be as useful in making professional decisions about the day-to-day treatment of young adolescents as is our own. At the base of all professional education must be an open, inquiring mind — professionals who can observe students in their classrooms, reflect on what they observe, and modify their practices on the basis of that thoughtful reflection and dialogue with other professionals.

As a beginning, I recommend "n of one" research. That's a simple process that begins with the question, "What would *I* do if someone did that to *me?*" And if we answer that one honestly, we will begin to develop the fundamental understandings of our young adolescent clients that will enable us to do a better job of helping them to learn and to grow into a healthy, well-adjusted adulthood.

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XIV

Winston Pickett

The Development of the National Middle School Association

The National Middle School Association, established in 1973, is the only national professional association devoted specifically and exclusively to the furtherance of middle level education. Though still young and relatively small, it has already established itself as a major voice in American education. Members come from the ranks of administrators, teachers, college teacher educators, students, parents and others interested in the education of early adolescents. This chapter chronicles the emergence and development of this professional association.

THE STAGE OF ESTABLISHMENT, 1970-73

According to John Blight (personal communication, June 29, 1982), the modern middle school movement began in 1960 with the opening of two new schools in Saginaw, Michigan under the direction of George E. Mills. The organizational pattern of these schools was grades 5-8. During the next few years a considerable number of middle schools opened in the midwestern area of the United States.

Two conferences on this emerging type of school were held in 1967, one at Miami University (Ohio) and one at the University of Toledo. These conferences gave additional impetus to the movement.

As more and more middle schools were established, educators began to think about an organization which would serve middle school personnel. In the spring of 1970, John Blight and Ron Maertens specifically discussed the idea of a middle school organization. They decided to issue a call to public school and university educators to attend a conference at the University of Toledo on October 12, 1970 (J. Blight, personal communication, June 29, 1982). This invitation was sent to school districts and universities serving the area of southern Michigan and northwestern Ohio. The conference attracted twenty-two persons, approximately fifteen of those attending were administrators from public schools and the rest were from area universities.

At the end of this conference, those who were interested in formally organizing for the improvement of middle schools were invited to stay for further discussions. A small group assembled and drafted an organizational plan and by-laws for a new association. The group elected John Blight, secretary, and Anthony Topoleski, treasurer. These two officers were to function until sufficient members were available to select a full slate of officers. The early work of organization (J. Blight, letter to Gordon Vars, June 21, 1971) was continued by telephone, informal meetings of two or three, and correspondence. Thus, the Midwest Middle School Association was brought into being.

The purposes of this Association were: (a) to promote the development and growth of the middle school as a distinct and necessary entity in the structure of American education; (b) to disseminate information about the middle school movement in the states serviced by the Association; and (c) to promote forums for the sharing of ideas and innovations among middle school professionals.

The first annual conference of the new association was held in Dayton, Ohio in 1971. It attracted 116 participants, 60 from Ohio, 36 from Michigan, 9 from Indiana, and 11 whose state was not recorded. Several resolutions concerning the organizational structure were introduced during the conference. One resolution gave Board status to area chairmen and chairmen of standing committees. The resolution passed and became policy. A suggestion that members organize in each state and receive a portion of the membership dues for their work was tabled. A further resolution suggested that MMSA become an "umbrella" organization for all state or regional middle school organizations, but no action was taken on it. This "umbrella" resolution was the first serious consideration of the idea of establishing a "national" association (MMSA, Board of Control minutes, April, 1972).

Gordon Vars of Kent State University was selected as the first Association president.

The leadership in the early days of the Midwest Middle School Association came from middle school principals, school superintendents and university professors. Blight (personal communication, June 29, 1982) stated, "The newly formed association was designed as a leadership organization for middle school administrators and university personnel." The by-laws of the Association had both "Fellow" (full rights) and "Associates" (limited rights) as divisions for membership. Full membership was only available to members from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. The distinction made in membership between Fellows and Associates was a problem for the Association from the beginning and was not resolved until the writing of revisions to the constitution and by-laws in 1973.

As a part of the metamorphosis to a national association, the deletion of the term "fellow" and the insertion of the term "member" was suggested by the 1973 President Hal Gaddis of Wright State University in his proposals for constitutional changes. These suggestions were later implemented and became a part of the constitution in preparation for conversion to a national association.

At the close of the 1973 membership year a ballot was issued to members soliciting their opinion on the matter of becoming a national association. The result of that referendum was announced by the new President Glenn Maynard, a professor at Kent State University:

> The ballots have been counted — nearly unanimous consent for the Midwest Middle School Association to become the NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION. The mandate is clear. The membership expects the new organization, with its national scope, to be the leader in furthering the concept of "middle schools." Your Board of Directors has accepted this responsibility and, with the assistance of the membership, this new organization will become the national leader as expected.
>
> There has been some question about membership in other educational organizations that appear to be in competition. The National Middle School Association is not in competition with any educational organization whether it be national, state, or local for classroom teachers, principals, or other educational personnel. Indeed, the National Middle School Association annual dues are modest enough to allow an individual to belong to other higher-dues organizations as well. (Maynard, 1973, p.57)

During the years of establishment, the organization grew from 22 to 250 members. The early concerns regarding membership were answered with a clear statement that has become a continuing principle of the Association—any person working with or interested in the transescent was eligible. This decision automatically answered the other question concerning membership in other organizations.

During the stage of establishment MMSA-NMSA changed dramatically. Begun as a regional organization for middle school administrators and university professors, it evolved into a national organization for anyone interested in the transescent.

The need for drastic changes to accommodate this new membership structure resulted in changes in leadership, organization and other areas which produced some additional stress on the young organization.

Early leaders of the Midwest Association included: John Blight, Ron Maertens, Gordon Vars, Anthony Topoleski, Hal Gaddis, Tom Gatewood, Freda Carlson and Lou Tosi. These leaders developed the organizational structure which gave stability to the young organization and offered the opportunity for growth, and provided various forums for displaying the need for a unified group of middle school educators.

In the 1970's a study was conducted by Morris Mellinger and John Rackauskas (1977) of Chicago State College. It reflected the disjointed movement and foreshadowed the NMSA. The study concluded:

> While the middle school movement appears to be undergoing a healthy expansion, it still has a long way to go to meet acceptable middle school guidelines regarding such key factors as staff-pupil ratios, flexible scheduling, exploratory course offerings, and the rest. Given the confusion that seems to currently dominate the movement, the authors suggest that a National Association of Middle Schools be established to promulgate clearcut guidelines and specific criteria for school accreditation. (pp.62-63)

The now established National Middle School Association, while not developed for the purpose of establishing criteria or standards, would prove to be a major factor in giving unity to the middle school movement.

THE STAGE OF EXPANSION 1974-1977

The second stage in the metamorphosis of the National Middle School Association brought about new purposes, organizational structure, administrative leadership, publications, conferences, membership, and improved financial status.

Policy Decisions

During his address to the First Annual Conference of the National Middle School Association, held in Columbus, Ohio in 1974, Paul George (1975) challenged NMSA and its members when he asserted:

> I believe we must continue to develop a truly national strength and commitment to improving education for the emerging adolescent. The National Middle School Association must be strengthened and extended to permit continuing growth and self renewal on a truly national scale. I believe we must view other school organizations working with transescents, junior high schools, intermediate schools, etc., as partner institutions rather than enemies. (p.5)

George's challenge was timely. However, making the full transition from MMSA to NMSA and then extending efforts to others would require gradual adjustment and time.

A new purpose was, however, added to the revision of the Constitution and By-laws in the 1974 draft, as follows: "To cooperate with organizations and associations with common interest to further the ideals and philosophy of middle school education" (NMSA Board of Directors Minutes, March, 1974). Although this purpose was not officially approved until the 1976 revision of the Constitution and By-laws, it identified this desire of the leadership as early as 1974 (NMSA Board of Directors Minutes, February, 1975).

A position paper on middle schools was the first attempt of this cooperation. The paper, sponsored and published by ASCD, was presented to the New Orleans ASCD meeting in February 1975 by Tom Gatewood, who identified himself with NMSA. The publication was authored by Gatewood and Charles Dilg, both active in NMSA.

With the decision to become a national organization came the need to change the structure. One of the first concerns was revision of the Constitution and By-laws. The Board of Directors accepted the results of the balloting on revisions which approved the change. They immediately amended the name of the approved document to read "National Middle School Association Constitution and By-laws". Even though the membership had just approved the document in November 1973, a new revision was considered important by the leadership. In response to the request for Constitution and By-laws revisions, Board Member Robert Malinka of Indiana, distributed to the Board of Directors in August 1974 a draft of proposed changes. There was much discussion about the clarity of various sections of the document, so it was decided that a careful review of the draft should be made by each board member. The proposed changes were left in limbo by the Board for more than two years. The final revisions were completed and submitted to the membership for approval or rejection in October 1976.

The *Middle School Journal*, which began in mimeographed form, gained stability in the period of expansion due to the extensive volunteer efforts of Glenn Maynard.

As the NMSA grew new meaning for the Association and its purposes evolved. Tom Gatewood (1976), President of NMSA in 1976, declared:

> Middle school education needs a systematic nationwide approach similar to that found in the fields of medicine and agriculture where new and practical information is disseminated rapidly to practitioners through a great profusion of meetings, workshops, and publications.
>
> With this in mind, the NMSA is weighing its priorities and directing most of its resources toward assistance for kids and their teachers. (p.7)

In 1977 the Board of Directors established an ad hoc Committee on Future Goals and Directions of NMSA. William Alexander, widely viewed as the father of the middle school, was asked to chair this committee and report directly to the Board. The appointment of this committee prompted discussion on the need of the organization to encourage parents and teachers to be involved in leadership positions, especially as committee members.

Management Concerns

The problem of increased mail and confusion in the mailing process surfaced in early 1974. In a move to control incoming and outgoing mail, an address at Fairborn, Ohio, was established. Past President Hal Gaddis was asked by the Board to seek office space and secretarial services on the campus of Wright State University. Discussion of a new position, Executive Director, followed. A decision was postponed, however, until sufficient guidelines could be established.

Organizational changes for NMSA in 1975 occurred at the Board of Directors' meetings, which were held as need arose. A report from the national office in Fairborn became a standard agenda item for each meeting. At the February, 1975 meeting in Plymouth, Michigan, Gaddis reported that NMSA had been incorporated and had applied for a mailing permit. In addition, an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) application had been filed with the regional IRS office. Gaddis was appointed Director of the NMSA central office at that meeting.

In order to insure a national representation of Board members, a regional representation plan was submitted to the Board of Directors on July 11, 1975, by Board member Jim Fox who had been charged with the responsibility for presenting a plan. The acceptance of the report by the Board of Directors indicated their commitment to national representation. This was important for, inevitably, the early image of the organization and its initial leadership was midwestern rather than national.

The breakdown of the states was based roughly on current membership in the Association. Attempts were made to establish regions which possessed, as closely as possible, like membership totals. It was recognized that boundaries would need to change in the future as membership totals changed; however, this plan assured all sections of the United States representation on the Board of Directors of the National Middle School Association. In 1977, this structure was included in the proposed constitutional changes, allowing regional members to be seated on the Board.

The addition of state coordinators further affected the organizational structure of the Association. At the beginning of 1975, nineteen states had Board-approved coordinators. This number was increased because the membership list included representatives from forty states and Canada.

In 1977, William Alexander, chairman of the Committee on Future Goals and Direction reported to the Board of Directors that the Committee had three major points growing out of their study. First, it was recommended that NMSA remain a goal-oriented organization. The Committee wanted the NMSA to continue to stand for something, not just recruit members to create and maintain its own bureaucracy. Second, the Committee suggested that NMSA continue to involve its members in a wide variety of activities designed to achieve the central goal of the organization, the promotion of middle school education. The last major area the committee addressed was the evaluation of NMSA. The Committee advocated a program of carefully-designed, goal-oriented, and on-going evaluation activities for NMSA. The central theme of the committee report was clarification of NMSA as an organization dedicated to serving the Association goals and responding to the needs of its membership. The Committee stated: "National leadership should serve as a catalyst, rather than as a provider of all services. There should be maximum initiative and involvement at the grass roots level" (Alexander, 1977, p. 16).

In 1976, Regional Trustees and State Affiliates from Indiana, Florida, Arkansas, Ohio, Michigan, and Georgia were added to the Board of Directors. This diversified group of middle school representatives offered President Gatewood expertise from many parts of the country and from different levels of middle schools. Gatewood proved to be a task-oriented leader who used his personal resources well (Gaddis, personal communication, May 25, 1982).

The greatest area of NMSA expansion during this stage was in publications. The *Journal* expanded from twenty to thirty-two pages and from five hundred to two thousand copies distributed. The overall quality improved dramatically under the leadership of John Lounsbury who accepted the editor's responsibility in 1976. For the first time, NMSA also began to produce special publications, the first of which was *The Middle School: A Look Ahead* edited by Paul George. Problems with shipping and processing of publications became trouble spots during this stage as new administrative routines and procedures were being developed to handle the increased workload.

Membership and finances grew during the stage of expansion. The annual conference became more important. Each conference drew more participants from the 372 in 1974 (Columbus) to over 1,200 in 1977 (Denver). The annual conferences provided considerable impetus for the Association and the middle school movement. The opportunity to contact new colleagues of like interests coupled with quality conference programs established the annual conference as an outstanding Association service.

THE STAGE OF REVISION, 1978-1980

The stage of revision in the metamorphosis of the National Middle School Association (NMSA) took place in 1978, 1979, and 1980. The activities during those years brought needed revisions and further refinements of the Association's purposes, organizational structure, administrative leadership, publications, conferences, membership and financial conditions.

In 1978, the purposes of NMSA were confirmed anew and recorded in the Constitution and By-laws of the Association. Yet, many middle school practitioners still questioned NMSA leaders as to whether those purposes were pursued adequately. William Alexander (1978, p. 19) in his article, "How Fares the Middle School Movement?," wrote, "There has been very limited progress toward the objectives of the middle school movement, but it has been much too little, much too slow. We must do better!" Alexander cautioned middle school educators, including those in NMSA, that the purpose and objectives must be met if the movement was to remain in the educational scheme of this country. James Fox (1978), President of NMSA for 1978, challenged the membership when he affirmed:

> The National Middle School Association is at a crossroads in its existence. While the Association has been a vital part of the national middle school movement in the past, it is time for this group to emerge as a major force within the educational community. (p. 17)

Fox continued his warning that the Association must adhere to its stated purposes. He outlined the areas that he believed would strengthen NMSA. Fox included the following in his recommendations: increase membership, broaden participation to include parents, board members, superintendents and supervisors; broaden and add publications; strengthen the Association's governance; and establish middle school research projects (p. 18).

In 1980, an important proposal was advanced by Pamela Chiles Hall. In a letter to the Board of Directors dated February 2, 1980, she requested that [illegible] position paper defining a middle school be prepared. Hall wrote:

> The National Middle School Association ... should ... begin to find ways to deal with the complex questions which continue to confront middle school educators across the country. The primary question which is asked annually and daily is "What is a middle school?" Let's begin to forge answers to this complex question before some other organization or group does it. Our Association should be leading the way for educators. I contend this is only one of the pressing questions or problems which must be dealt with; let's start here.

The proposal was received and acted on by the Board of Directors. The 1980 President, John Swaim of Colorado, appointed Al Arth, William Alexander, Charles Cherry, Conrad Toepfer, Donald Eichhorn, and Gordon Vars to prepare a position paper. The work of this committee marked the first attempt of NMSA to establish a definition and base for organizing a middle school. After an extended period of discussion, writing, rewriting, and editing the position paper was published in 1982. Entitled, *This We Believe*, it has been well received by educators across the nation.

A major force in shaping the organizational structure of NMSA was the Governance Committee chaired by Ruth Peck. Most of the committee's recommendations were adopted as policy. Some of these were as follows: cutting costs of Board meetings, increasing participation by teachers and parents, securing secretarial help in the central office, and providing a full-time Executive Director.

Administrative leadership was becoming more representative of the general membership during the stage of revision. The major areas of university personnel, principals, central office personnel, teachers and parents were roughly proportionate to the membership. New leadership evolved from the first female president, Sheri Russell Scott of Ohio and the first parent elected to the Board, Pauline Pavlick of Michigan.

The area of publications grew at a greater rate than any other area of NMSA during the stage of revision. Manuscripts for possible publication in the *Middle School Journal* were being received at a rate almost faster than they could be evaluated. This made it possible to maintain a high quality publication. The enlarged Publications Committee also became involved in the development of monographs.

As publications increased in quality and quantity the need for some stipend for the editor surfaced. The idea was endorsed but implementation was delayed because of inadequate funds. Another concern was with the editorship of the *Newsletter*. It was decided that the President-elect should serve as editor, as this would provide that individual with valuable insights into the operations of the Association and its affiliates.

Annual conferences during the stage of revision continued to grow in number of participants and quality of programs.

Financially, NMSA had to struggle to remain solvent during the stage of revision. Annual audits and budgets were initiated in an attempt to remain solvent but active.

Membership during the stage of revision fluctuated somewhat. The 1978 goal of two thousand members was almost reached, but the records showed a slight decline in membership during the last years of NMSA's first decade, due, in part, to a needed increase in membership dues. An increase in *Journal* subscriptions and sales of publications helped to offset this drop.

The National Middle School Association's activities and programs grew to need an Executive Director, full-time secretarial help, an Administrative Assistant, and a part-time editor. In 1979, Hal Gaddis became a full-time Executive Director. A central headquarters was established in Fairborn, Ohio which provided space for administrative offices, supplies, and storage.

Milestones in the Development of the National Middle School Association

1970 - The Midwest Middle School Association was launched by a small group of educators meeting in Toledo, Ohio.

1971 - The first annual conference of MMSA was held in Dayton, Ohio.

1973 - The MMSA votes approval of the plan to become the National Middle School Association and endorses a policy of open membership.

1974 - First Annual Conference of the NMSA held in Columbus, Ohio.

1975 - A National office was established in Fairborn, Ohio with Hal Gaddis as director.

1976 - Membership reaches 1,000. Six state affiliates approved.

1976 - The *Middle School Journal* expanded and improved.

1977 - The first special publication, *"The Middle School: A Look Ahead,"* was issued.

1980 - The Annual Conference, held in Nashville, registered 2,200 participants.

1982 - The Association headquarters was moved to Columbus, Ohio in property purchased by the Association.

1982 - Association position paper, *This We Believe*, published.

1983 - Restructuring of regions from six to ten was approved. Membership reaches 2,500.

1984 - Annual Conference returned to Columbus, Ohio, site of the first conference.

STAGE OF REFINEMENT 1981-1984

The next stage in the metamorphosis of NMSA encompassed the years of 1981 to 1984. Changes and improvements continued to be implemented by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director.

Some of the major changes that took place during 1981 were a direct result of actions and ideas suggested earlier. One such change was to provide some compensation for the editor of the *Middle School Journal.*

A change was made in the membership year in order to align it with the school year (September 1 to August 31) and to encourage university student affiliation. The University of Northern Iowa was the first student group to affiliate. Association membership grew to an all-time high of 2500 in 1983.

The major development in 1982 was the move of the office from Fairborn to Columbus, Ohio. Board approval was given to the Executive Director to secure appropriate office space in the Columbus area. A house and property were selected for purchase and an option exercised pending Board inspection and final approval.

Also in 1982, the Board began a study of the restructuring of the regions and roles of Trustees in each region. One year later the restructuring of regions was approved (to be fully implemented in 1986). NMSA regions will then increase from six to ten and the number of voting state affiliates will be reduced from eight to six. The affiliation of the American School Counselors Association was consummated, similar to one previously made with the Junior High/Middle School Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English.

At the time of this writing, 1984 was not yet completed, however, the Board had presented several goals that were to be sought during the year. These were as follows:

(1) to see the actual beginning of the new regional structure. (2) to provide the Committee on Institutes and Workshops a plan that would include consistent leadership and planning through the national office and (3) to assess the office as to its needs, procedures and staffing, which will allow NMSA to better service its members while monitoring its expenditures.

CONCLUSION

The National Middle School Association has grown in numbers from a handful that gathered in Toledo in 1970 into a substantial and still growing association of over 2500 members located in every state, the District of Columbia, and twelve foreign countries. The affiliated state and regional associations now number thirty and encompass 35 states.

Current benefits to members include:

1. Receipt of the *Middle School Journal,* a professional quarterly devoted exclusively to middle school education;

2. A newsletter, published four times yearly, which gives a current record

of middle school activities in the regions and other pertinent information;

3. A bonus publication each year to all members;

4. Access to monographs and research annuals published by the Association.

5. Reduced rates to the annual conference, and some regional meetings sponsored by NMSA; and

6. Representation by the Association at many conferences, working groups, and professional activities.

The National Middle School Association is a voice for the middle school concept that is available and ready to respond to questions about transescent learners and the educational experiences they ought to have. Its members are teachers, administrators, university educators, parents, and others linked together by a common bond, concern for middle level learners, and active in furthering appropriate educational programs for them.

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XV

John H. Lounsbury

Epilogue - Unfinished Business: An Agenda for the Next Decade

As the National Middle School Association enters its second decade, the promise of the middle school as a means of achieving significant educational improvement holds firm. The middle school movement is not simply another "innovation," riding a brassy bandwagon through the streets of educational reform. It is not led by fast-talking pitchmen peddling panaceas. The middle school movement is real, substantial. It is firmly based in human growth and development. Its concepts are compatible with known principles of learning and, increasingly, it is supported by research findings.

This volume and the Association which sponsored it are both testaments to the validity of the middle school movement. But the growth and progress reported herein, although encouraging indications that thinking and efforts are pointed in the right direction, are still miles and miles from perfection. In some respects, early indications of success only make more obvious the extent of still unmet needs. And although an idea or an institution may be sound and logical does not mean it will prevail and loose the heavy hand of tradition or negate the staying power of long ensconced practices. So the middle school concept is still as much promise as practice. There is work to be done.

The past seventy-five years have provided many lessons to guide efforts to improve education. Truths have emerged in the field of intermediate education, particularly in the last twenty years, as the long overdue consideration of this age group by researchers and others has produced a substantial body of literature to go along with extensive practical experience. Those of us in the movement must now heed the classic warning of Santayana who declared that "Those who do not learn from history are condemned to relive it." In certain respects the middle school movement has already repeated some of the mistakes and undergone some of the negative experiences of the junior high school movement.

One generalization regarding intermediate education has emerged in recent years and ought now to be classified as a "given." It is that the proper grade level composition of a middle level school is a matter that should remain open to question. There is no clear evidence that one organizational pattern of grades is inherently superior to another, and it is not likely that such evidence will ever appear. The middle school concept, the middle school program, is simply not tied to one particular administrative grade organization.

There is considerable consensus, however, about the educational ideas and ideals that are inherent in the so-called middle school concept, all of which grow out of the unique nature of this age group and their needs. While there is no single model, no "right" curriculum, no complete orthodoxy, there is widespread agreement on the basic principles of transescent education and the conditions which gave rise to it.

Some of these views and conditions were summarized in the National Middle School Association's position paper, **This We Believe** (1982), as follows:

> ...the middle school is an educational response to the needs and characteristics of youngsters during transescence and, as such, deals with the full range of intellectual and developmental needs.
>
> ...young people going through the rapid growth and extensive maturation that occurs in early adolescence need an educational program that is distinctively different from either the elementary or the secondary model.
>
> ...existing programs for this age group have all too often lacked focus on transescent characteristics and needs.
>
> ...educators, school board members, parents, and citizens generally need to become more cognizant of this age group and what an effective educational program for this group requires.
>
> ...no other age level is of more enduring importance because the determinants of one's behavior as an adult, self-concept, learning interests and skills, and values largely are formed in this period of life.
>
> ...the developmental diversity of this age group makes it especially difficult to organize an educational program that adequately meets the needs of all.
>
> ...the academic needs of middle school students are affected greatly by their physical, social, and emotional needs which also must be addressed directly in the school program. (p.18)

AN AGENDA FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

The agenda for the next decade is very much like an agenda that might have been developed ten years earlier would look like. In 1984, however, we are much better equipped to tackle the monumental tasks that need to be accomplished. There is a considerably larger cadre of middle school practitioners; there is a growing body of research findings to support middle level education; there are more model schools; there are more professional groups — including the young National Middle School Association itself — giving attention to educational programs for early adolescents. The years, 1964-1984, may not have produced the far-reaching changes many advocated and hoped for, but they have been, perhaps, years of readiness, a necessary period for the accumulation of an experiential background that has to precede major action.

In light of these developments, it would seem that an agenda prepared in 1994 would not have to be as long or as basic. Experience indicates, however, that there is never the easy assurance of real progress. To improve significantly the educational programs needed by early adolescents will require not only a general desire for improvement but also fundamental changes in objectives, in organization, and a clear philosophical construct that will give meaning and direction to reform efforts.

A noted educator stated, "partial, superficial, and timorous 'revision' rather than general, fundamental, and courageous reconstruction characterizes curriculum making in the public schools.... For over fifty years tinkering has characterized the attack on the curriculum" (p.3).

The author of those words was Harold Rugg and the date of their publication was 1926! Since first enunciated, fifty-eight additional years have passed and little more than tinkering has been done. The recommendations of most of the recent national studies, if implemented, would be further cases in point, giving the appearance of reform but not necessarily representing real changes.

Education writer, George Leonard (1984), made essentially the same point in a recent article. He decried the lack of any fundamental reforms in the proposals for improvement made in the several national reports issued in 1983. In a world characterized by major changes in every other aspect of life "the reformers are offering the nation an educational horse and buggy. They would improve the buggy, keep the passengers in it longer, and pay the driver more. But it would still be a horse and buggy" (p.50).

To achieve adequate implementation of the middle school concept will require more than tinkering and more than new seat covers for the buggy. Most of the agenda items listed below are not themselves fundamental program reforms, but they are important reforms that will make possible, in individual schools, the programmatic reforms needed.

These agenda items are not somebody else's business. Several of them should touch each one of us and call for our involvement, whether we are a teacher, an administrator, a curriculum director, a parent, a state department consultant, or a concerned lay citizen. The success of the middle school movement in the decade ahead will hinge on whether or not current advocates can maintain the emotional charge and the commitment that is required to stay on the cutting edge and institute fundamental reforms. Most educational movements level off in time and become merged into the status quo. A few people have already claimed that the middle school has run its course and is on the decline, but there is no real evidence to support such a position and considerable evidence to the contrary.

It is true that it is not now possible for the number of middle schools to increase at the rate of the last ten years. Declining enrollments and a dip in the birth rate a decade ago will make impossible the continued rise in the number of middle schools. Unfortunately, numbers seem to impress many people and growth is all too often equated with success.

1. **Seek the continued growth of the National Middle School Association.** Although the Association is only ten years old and has just begun to achieve stability, it must continue to exert itself to be the voice and influence it could be and should be. With its single focus and open membership it is not in competition with other long-established professional organizations and, encouraged by its remarkable progress in a few short years, should press on so that it touches every school in which there are intermediate grades.

2. **Establish middle level programs in all schools that contain middle level grades.** Although not enrolled in a middle level school, a sixth, seventh, or eighth grader is every bit as much a transescent as is one who attends a middle school or junior high school. His or her need for exploration, for a comprehensive health and physical education program, or for socialization experiences, to give three examples, is no less.

On-going professional relationships need to be established with teachers and principals of these grades wherever they are housed. The middle school is not an organizational entity; it is a program and it needs to be installed wherever middle level grades are located.

3. **Extend efforts to educate the general public regarding the nature of early adolescents.** Underlying nearly every significant problem in the field of middle school education is a basic lack of knowledge concerning early adolescents with a resulting lack of appreciation for this age group and what an educational program for these students would require. In the eyes of most people, when looking at a youth, that which isn't a child, is an adoles-

cent. Yet transescents have taken or are taking clear strides out of childhood though they are not yet within striking distance of adolescence. The period of transition from childhood to adolescence, for an individual, may last eighteen months or four years. And the physical development of an individual may not coincide with that person's social, emotional, or intellectual development. In terms of the extent of change and the influence of those changes on one's entire life, there is simply no more important period of life ... Yet it still remains the least understood period.

Only as citizens generally as well as educators specifically become fully cognizant of this unique developmental period will a distinctive middle level educational program be achievable.

4. **Institute efforts to communicate beyond existing practitioners.** Educators have been notorious for their tendency to talk to themselves. While this is understandable in the field of intermediate education during the past twenty years, as basic issues and mutual understandings were worked out, the time has now come to extend communication efforts about the specifics of middle school education to new constituencies. This is particularly necessary since the fundamental source of so many of the problems in middle level education is the widespread lack of understanding of this age group already noted.

One particular group that certainly should be sought out and cultivated is that of school board members, others are members of the various helping professions.

5. **Achieve recognition of both the humane and the academic responsibilities of middle schools.** Middle level programs that meet the needs of their clienteles cannot be developed so long as the major and almost exclusive programmatic focus is the academic or cognitive component. This in no way questions the validity of the academic aspect of the program, but that foundational responsibility itself cannot be achieved effectively at this level unless adequate recognition is also given in the curriculum to the non-cognitive needs, the pressing social, emotional, and physical aspects of this period of life.

6. **Break the hammerlock of departmentalization as the sole basis for organizing the curriculum.** Long tradition developed in high schools and colleges has entrenched the teacher-subject-class arrangement in junior high schools and middle schools. It is, however, a serious handicap to the achievement of many middle school objectives. Life outside of school is not departmentalized; and seeking to teach about life exclusively through the artificial categories of separate subjects is not effective at this developmen-

tal level. Understandings about the world are best achieved when the fabric of life is presented as a whole cloth. Interdisciplinary planning and teaching, block scheduling, and core programs are ways by which middle schools seek to integrate educational experiences.

7. **Secure leadership committed to the middle school in state departments of education.** The widespread lack of state leadership is a serious and difficult to understand condition. Very few state departments have established a position which focuses on the middle school. Very few have even employed a person with recognized expertise in this level of education. This is often true even in states which have, and have long had, large numbers of intermediate institutions. The failure to recognize intermediate institutions in many technical and subtle ways is the result of this neglect.

8. **Achieve distinctive middle grades teacher certification and teacher education in every state.** Despite a longstanding recognition of the lack of such and agreement on the need for such, disappointingly little progress has been made. In the past twenty years, appropriate certification for middle level teachers and related teacher education programs have expanded to some degree but not nearly to the degree needed.

Specific steps to institute needed middle grades certification should be taken in every state without it, whether at the initiative of a professional association, a college level task force, or a self-appointed school system level committee. It is not reasonable to expect any single elementary teacher education program to prepare adequately both primary grade teachers and middle level teachers. The same is true of secondary programs that inevitably focus on the upper high school grades. Colleges and universities are in a position to exert leadership toward resolving this problem; but they have seldom done so.

The establishment of some specific requirements for middle level administrators is a matter which also needs to be given serious consideration.

9. **Promote the involvement of parents in the development of improved middle level programs.** While continued efforts to *inform* parents are always needed, the active *involvement* of parents is even more crucial. The job of educating transescents requires the participation of both parents and teachers. Parents should be utilized as resource persons, aides, and advisors. Homework assignments ought to call for their direct involvement and participation. Individual and group conferences should enlist their attendance.

The school should also be seen as a resource for helping them carry out their tasks as parents. Although contemporary societal conditions make the job of parental involvement all the more difficult, and often seemingly impossible, serious efforts to bring it about must be mounted. On-going dialogue and discussions between citizens and educators in an attempt to thrash out answers to the significant questions surrounding education, its purposes and its program, is a most desirable goal.

10. **Institute one or more specific improvements in each and every middle school**. In many respects, more important than where one stands is in what direction one is moving. If every middle level school, no matter what its current status or where it lies on the continuum from traditional junior high school to advocated middle school, would take a clear step toward the further implementation of the middle school concept in the years just ahead, a powerful momentum would be generated.

In some tightly departmentalized schools it might be simply instituting block scheduling that would open up the possibilities for cooperative teaching. In others, it might involve the bolder launching of an advisor-advisee program or the expansion of the reporting system to recognize more fully non-academic areas of growth.

In this day and time, there is little to commend standing pat. Every middle school educator, every middle level school, by overt action, needs to be on the move. And there is no good reason why every faculty, following thoughtful discussion, should not commit itself, *in writing*, to some specific programmatic improvement.

All of the items on the agenda for the next decade are attainable. No one of them is dependent upon significantly increased levels of state funding, massive federal grants, or the initiation of other persons beyond our influence.

The tasks are clear.

There is work to be done.

Let us begin.

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Presidents, MMSA/NMSA
1972-1984

1972

Gordon F. Vars, was a Professor of Education at Kent State University and teacher in the University School during his tenure. He had a close association with the junior high and middle school movements in Maryland, Tennessee, and New York before going to Ohio. An effective core teacher and recognized scholar with a doctorate from George Peabody College for Teachers, Vars was selected as the first president of MMSA.

During MMSA's initial year, he sponsored a conference at Kent State and urged an end to the debate between middle school and junior high school advocates.

Vars continues as a professor at Kent State University and as an active professional leader.

1973

Hal Gaddis, was an Associate Professor of Education and Assistant Dean at Wright State University in 1973. After graduating from Ohio State University, Gaddis served as an upper elementary teacher and elementary principal. He continued graduate work at O.S.U. and earned both masters and doctoral degrees. In 1968 he joined the faculty of Wright State, but continued his close association with public schools.

One of the original MMSA members, Dr. Gaddis was instrumental in making the NMSA an open membership organization and one which sought to resemble the middle school philosophy. During his term, the issue of membership was thrashed out and decided in favor of a single purpose, non-exclusive association.

Since 1975 he has been the Executive Director of NMSA.

1974

Glenn Maynard was a Professor of Educational Administration at Kent State University during the year that MMSA became NMSA. This event was itself certainly the highlight of his term. Maynard, serving as managing editor, devoted considerable time an effort into getting the *Middle School Journal* organized, printed, and distributed during not only the year of 1974 but before and after.

Maynard began as an elementary and junior high school teacher and coach, became a principal and then an assistant superintendent before beginning college level work. He has been active in professional affairs holding many important posts. A native of Illinois, his doctorate was earned at the University of Northern Colorado.

1975

Keith Brown was serving as Assistant Superintendent for Middle Education in the Metropolitan School District of Perry Township, Indiana, when elected. During his term, a great many organizational procedures and policies were established, helping to give NMSA stability and insuring a more orderly growth. Membership climbed substantially and the first five state affiliates were approved during his presidency.

Brown holds degrees from Indiana Central College and Butler University. He has served as an elementary teacher, an elementary principal, and a junior high school principal, all in the Perry Township Metro School District where he continues to serve as an Assistant Superintendent.

1976

Tom Gatewood was a faculty member at Central Michigan University during his tenure. He was one of the charter members of MMSA and had been recognized for his early research on the effectiveness of middle schools.

During his term, membership grew to 1,200 members, the position of executive director was officially established, and a relatively permanent editor of the *Middle School Journal* was appointed.

Dr. Gatewood is currently a professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Northern Virginia Graduate Center in Falls Church.

1977

Robert M. Malinka, has been closely identified with the middle school movement through the National Middle School Resource Center which he developed and directed for eleven years in conjunction with the Indianapolis public school system. He had previously been a classroom teacher and counselor in grades 7 and 8.

NMSA achieved considerable national visibility during his term through Malinka's extensive travels to state associations and conferences. The Committee on Purposes and Future Goals, chaired by William Alexander, was established by Malinka and helped to clarify the unique purposes of NMSA.

1978

James H. Fox, Jr. was elected while serving as the Superintendent of the Mansfield, Ohio Schools. Educated at the University of Virginia (B.S.) and George Washington University (M.S. and Ed.D.), Fox had been a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and assistant superintendent. Currently, he is the Superintendent of Schools in Sarasota County, Florida.

His tenure was marked by considerable activity; highlights were: the membership reached 1,780, budgeting procedures were reorganized, a plan for conference rotation was developed, the position of Executive Director was established on a contractual basis, and the position of editor was more formally established.

1979

Louis Romano was a charter member of the MMSA and a trustee of NMSA during the initial years of operation. He was the instigator of the strong Michigan Association of Middle School Educators and now serves as its executive director.

Dr. Romano was Professor of Educational Administration at Michigan State University in 1979 and he continues in this position. During his term, the first office space was rented, the Executive Director was put under contract, and a full-time secretary/administrative assistant was hired.

His experience began as an elementary teacher and included long stints as an assistant superintendent and superintedent of schools in Michigan. His influence on education has been extended through his writings.

1980

John H. Swaim received his first two degrees from Emporia State University in Kansas and his doctorate at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. Initially, a junior high school social studies teacher, Swaim has also been Associate Director of the Laboratory School, University of Northern Colorado and Director of the University's middle school teacher education program.

During his tenure the constitution was revised, the number of publications increased, the Committee which prepared the NMSA position paper was appointed, and a system of rotation for the affiliates to serve as voting board members was established.

1980-81

Sheri Russell Scott was recognized by NMSA in 1978 for having been the first classroom teacher member of NMSA, then she became president in 1981. A middle school teacher with a mathematics specially, Scott holds degrees from Wright State University, where she has also served as an adjunct instructor.

In 1971 she was the co-chairman for the first MMSA conference and, for several years, she volunteered secretarial services for NMSA. During her tenure, the membership year was changed to the academic year, budgeting reforms were instituted, standing committees activities were coordinated, a stipend for the *Journal* editor was established, and the first university student association became affiliated.

1981-82

Mary F. Compton, was NMSA president during the time when the Association headquarters was moved to Columbus, Ohio where a permanent home had been secured on a lease/purchase agreement. The study to consider restructuring regions was also initiated that year. Dr. Compton had been a board member and association leader for a number of years previously.

A native of Detroit with degrees from George Peabody College for Teachers and the University of Florida, she had been an elementary and junior high school core teacher and an elementary principal in Sarasota before moving to the University of Georgia where she developed a model middle school teacher education program and continues as a Professor of Education.

1982-83

C. Kenneth McEwin is Professor of Education and Chairman of Elementary Education at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, where he established a middle grades teacher education program. He was the prime developer of the strong North Carolina League of Middle/Junior High Schools. The author of many publications and research projects in middle school education, Dr. McEwin received all three of his degrees from East Texas State University. His previous experiences include teacher, assistant principal, and principal.

The arrangements for the final purchasing of the Columbus, Ohio property as the national office and the approval of the redistricting plan occured during his tenure.

1983-84

Ronald L. Johnson is Principal of L'Anse Creuse Middle School South in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. He has been a science teacher, a counselor, and an assistant principal in the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools.

Educated at Bowling Green State University and the University of Michigan, he worked to complete the reorganization plan and begin its implementation during his term of office. He also established a calendar of cooperatively planned conferences and institutes and formed a study committee to assess office needs, procedures, and staffing in the future.

Directory of Authors

William M. Alexander is Professor Emeritus of Education at the University of Florida, and Visiting Professor at Appalachian State University. He has been very closely associated with the development of middle schools, and is an author of two major books (*The Emergent Middle School, 1968,* and *The Exemplary Middle School, 1981)* plus a great many articles and reports. In recognition of his expansive influence on middle school education. Dr. Alexander has received awards from the National Middle School Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the American Educational Research Association.

Alfred A. Arth is Professor of Education at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, where he directs the undergraduate, master's and doctoral middle school teacher education programs. A very active national consultant and sought-after speaker, Dr. Arth has made many middle school presentations at the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Association of School Administrators, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Middle School Association.

Mary F. Compton is Professor of Education at the University of Georgia, where she was responsible for designing and implementing one of the first comprehensive programs for the preparation of middle school teachers in the nation. A former middle school teacher and a past president of the National Middle School Association (1982-83), she is the author of numerous books and articles on middle school education. Dr. Compton is also widely sought as a consultant by school districts, governmental agencies, and institutions of higher education.

Nancy McIntyre Doda achieved wide recognition as a most effective classroom teacher and team leader at the Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville, Florida and as the author of the "Teacher to Teacher" column in the *Middle School Journal.* A 1974 bachelors graduate of Wake Forest University, she recently earned the Ph.D. degree at the University of Florida. She has been particularly active in educational consulting in recent years and has served all across the country as a conference speaker and resource person to faculties.

Donald H. Eichhorn is Superintendent of the Lewisburg, Pennsylvania Public Schools. He earned the respect of scholars and practitioners for his theoretical and curricular contributions to middle level education in upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania. His 1966 text, *The Middle School,* developed a model of multi-age grouping and interdisciplinary organization which continues to impact middle level curriculum development. His collaboration with physicians pioneered efforts to define developmental age characteristics of 10-to-14-year-old youngsters. His middle level educational writings have been translated into several languages. NMSA honored him in 1984 with its most prestigious award.

Paul S. George, Professor of Education at the University of Florida, in Gainesville, has edited, authored and coauthored almost 100 books, articles, filmstrips, and other publications on middle school education. One of the best known and most influential authorities on the middle school, he has worked with school districts in 40 states and a half dozen foreign nations. A strong advocate of interdisciplinary planning and multi-age grouping, he is often called upon as a speaker at major national and state conferences.

J. Howard Johnston received bachelors and masters degrees in English and education from the State University of New York and the Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming. He has taught in middle level and high schools in New York and Wyoming and is currently Professor of Education and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research in the College of Education, University of Cincinnati. He is co-author of the column, "What Research Says to the Practitioner" in the *Middle School Journal* and has lectured throughout North America and Europe on topics related to schooling for the young adolescent.

John H. Lounsbury has been associated with middle level education for more than thirty years through his research, writing, speaking, and consulting. Since 1976, he has served as editor of the *Middle School Journal* and the NMSA monographs. A doctoral graduate of George Peabody College for Teachers, he recently retired as Professor and Dean, School of Education, Georgia College where he had served for twenty-three years in order to have more time for his professional activities and responsibilities.

C. Kenneth McEwin is Professor and Chairperson of Elementary and Middle Grades Education at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina. He is the author of dozens of monographs, research reports, and articles and was the founder of the North Carolina League of Middle/Junior High Schools. During 1983-84 he served as President of the National Middle School Association. He also has wide experience as a speaker and consultant for school districts and professional organizations throughout the nation.

George E. Melton, served for twenty-five years as a junior high school principal in Illinois and Ohio. His many professional offices have included President of the Illinois Junior High School Principals Association, the Ohio Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Since 1980 he has served as Deputy Executive Director of NASSP, where his primary responsibility has been the Association's middle level programs and services and which have given him the opportunity to be an active and effective spokesman for middle level education.

Elliot Y. Merenbloom is principal of Pikesville Middle School in Baltimore County, Maryland. In addition to writing numerous articles for middle level periodicals he has written two monographs for NMSA, *Developing Effective Middle Schools Through Faculty Participation* and *The Team Process in the Middle School: A Handbook for Teachers*. A regular presenter at various educational conferences, he has served as a consultant for many school districts, particularly those converting to the middle school concept. He is active in NMSA and is a member of the Publications Committee.

Winston Pickett has served as an elementary and middle school teacher, coach, and, for the last twelve years, as a principal. A charter member of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools and its 1979-80 President, he has also been active in the National Association of Middle Schools as a Board member and as chairman of the conference committee which planned and carried out the 1980 Conference held in Nashville. He holds degrees from David Lipscomb College, Tennessee Technological University, and East Tennessee State University.

Conrad F. Toepfer, Jr. is Associate Professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction at the State University of New York at Buffalo. A curriculum generalist with special interest in middle level education, he began his career as a junior high teacher and has focused on ways to make education more responsive to the needs of transescent youngsters ever since. His writings include authorship of the "Junior High/Middle School Education" section in AERA's latest edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH. As a speaker and consultant he has traveled extensively. A charter member of NMSA, he was honored with the Association's 1980 Presidential Award.

Gordon F. Vars is a Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Kent State University in Ohio. Since beginning as a junior high school core teacher, he has continued to teach young people in addition to conducting professional development programs for junior high and middle school staff members, most recently throughout northeastern Ohio. A prolific author and frequent speaker and consultant, he has served education in many parts of the nation for more than thirty years. A founder of the National Middle School Association, he is also the Executive Director of the National Association for Core Curriculum.

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